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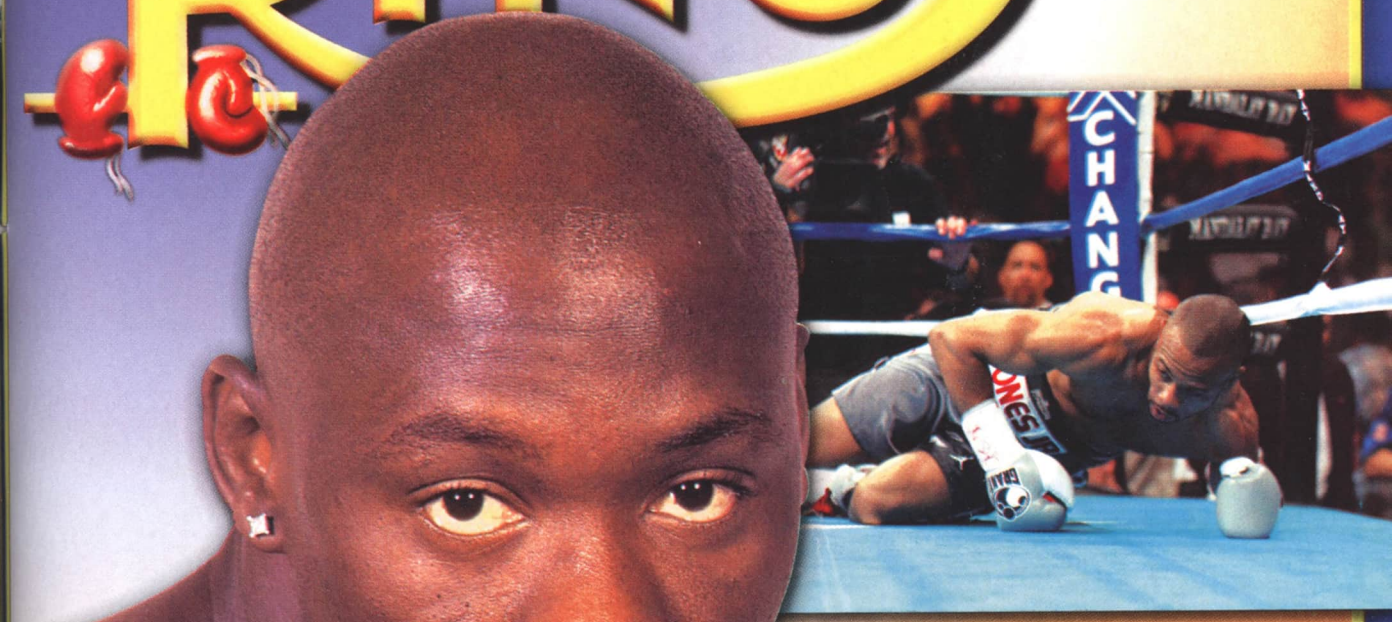

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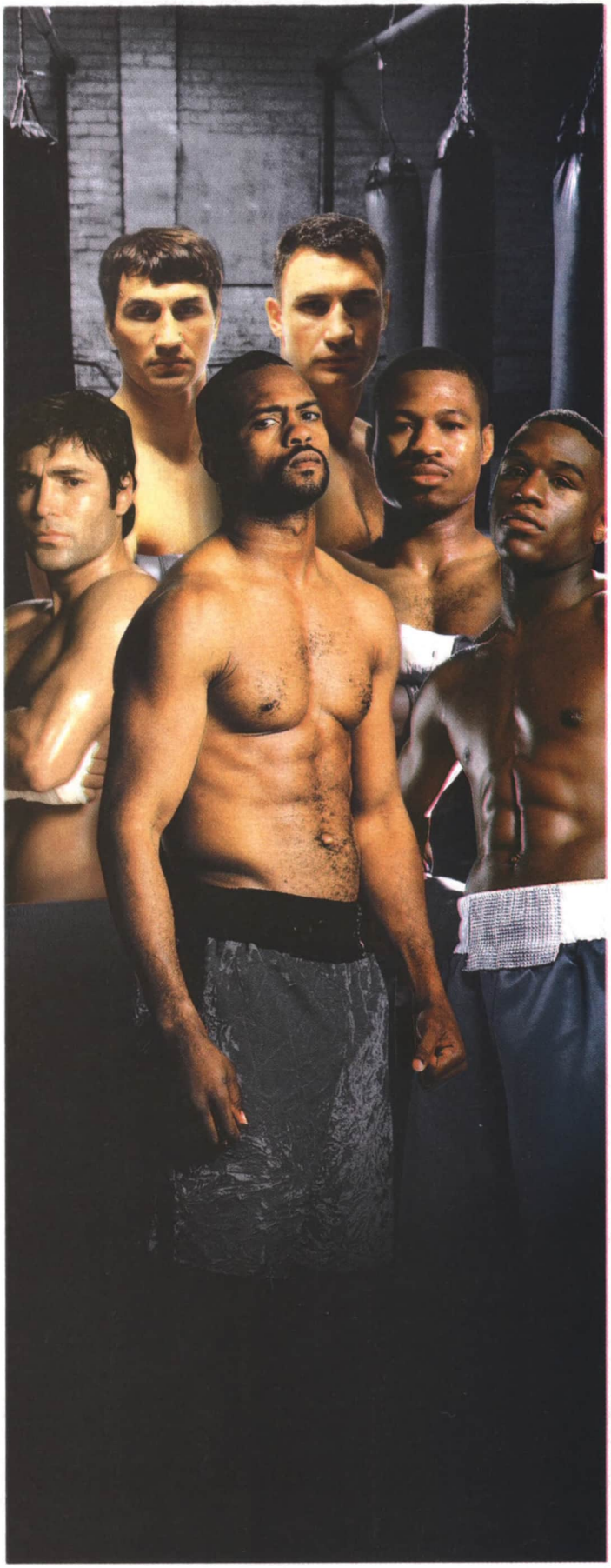

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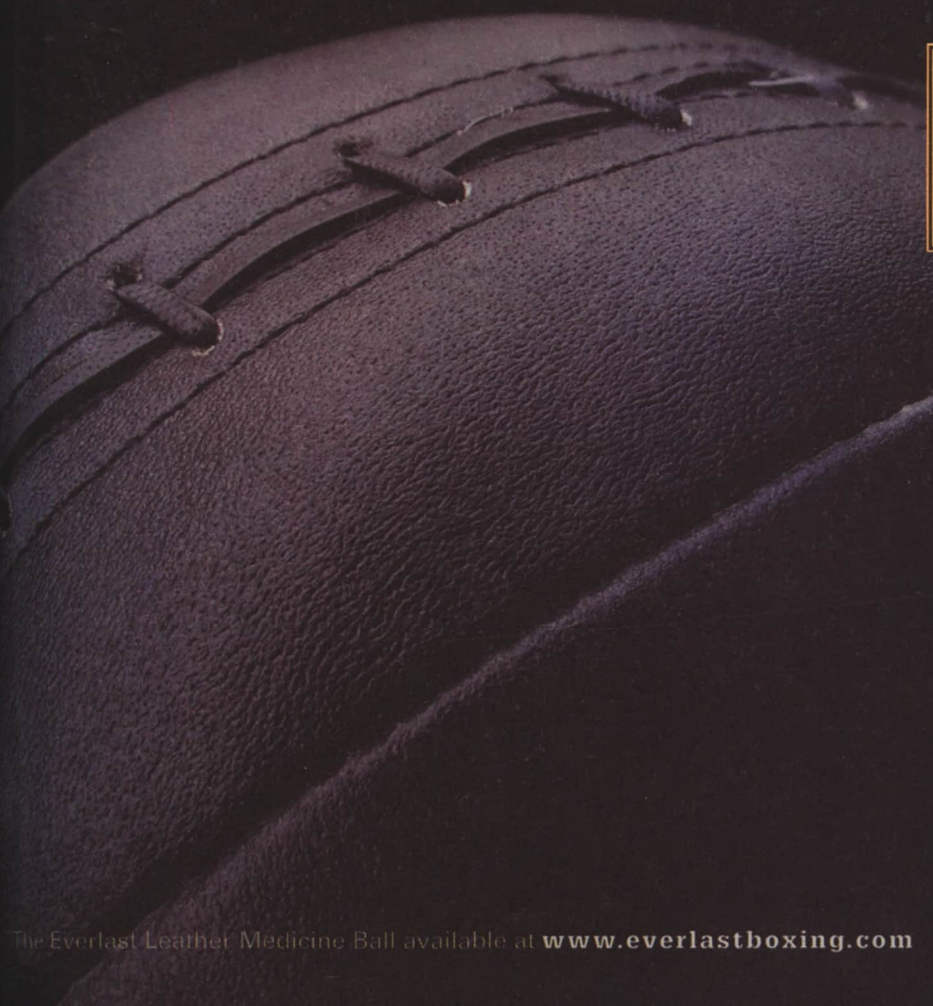

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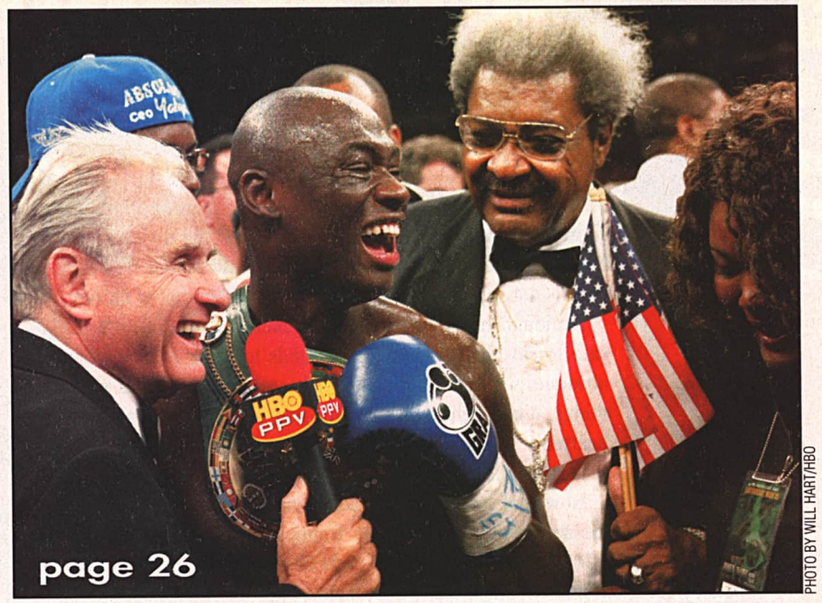

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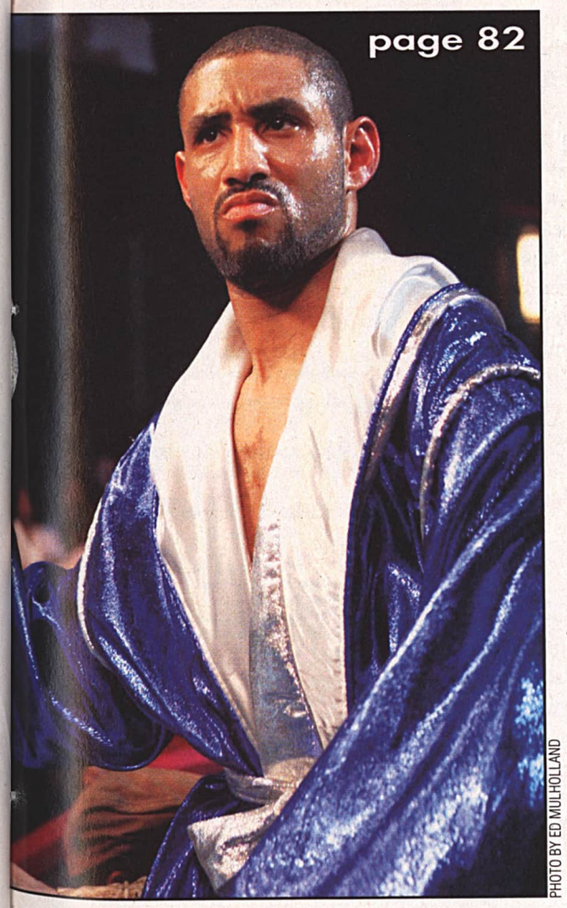

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RINGSIDE

Reaction to Roy Jones' knockout defeat at the hands of Antonio Tarver has been almost as revealing as the fight itself. More than anything else, it has accentuated the divide between the new breed of fans and those from the old school. The difference is not so much a matter of age, but rather one of attitude.

Although it's always risky to generalize, I think it's fairly safe to say that the new breed tends to think in terms of the absolute, while the old school takes a more qualified view of things. It is, I believe, mainly the new breed that bought wholeheartedly into the myth of Jones' invincibility, while the old school retained a measure of skepticism.

Now that Jones has proved eminently human, many among the new breed are in denial, frantically searching for excuses, while fervently hoping Jones can beat Tarver in a rubber match, which would put the world as they see it back on its axis. Meanwhile, members of the old school are reassured in the knowledge that if there's one thing that you can count on in boxing, it is that nobody is unbeatable.

Old-school fans always admired Jones' amazing physical gifts, but disliked his conceit and penchant for avoiding opponents that had a reasonable chance of giving him a competitive fight in favor of those he could brush aside with relative ease. Nobody has ever taken greater advantage of the alphabet organizations' counterproductive policy of elevating unworthy challengers to a mandatory position than Jones.

The new breed reveled in the sight of Jones' domination of less-gifted fighters. To them he was a comic book hero come to life, a fighter unencumbered by the problems of mere mortals. What they failed to understand is that it is the very fact that fighters are indeed human and vulnerable that ultimately makes them genuine heroes.

Some fighters become more loveable in defeat than they ever were in victory. While I respected Pernell Whitaker's marvelous boxing skills and willingness to face the best possible opposition, he was never a favorite of mine, neither style-wise nor as a personality. But the night he fought Felix Trinidad and took the worst beating of his career, I came away liking him more than ever before. "Sweet Pea" hung in there—with a broken jaw, no less—and lasted the distance against a younger, naturally larger, and far more powerful man. And in his darkest hour as a professional, Whitaker displayed the kind of courage we never knew he had until the night he faced Trinidad.

Jones also showed courage, groping his way back to his feet in a vain effort to continue. But by time he faced HBO's Larry Merchant in a postfight interview, he'd already fabricated a pathetic excuse for his defeat: He was bored.

Had Jones looked the camera square in the eye and admitted he'd got his clock cleaned and left it at that, my opinion of him would have soared. But then, as you've probably already surmised, I'm hopelessly old school.

***

A warning from the Numbers Lie Department: Riddick Bowe has a 40-1 (32) record. That looks impressive on paper, but let's hope that any jurisdiction in which "Big Daddy" tries to obtain a boxing license looks beyond the stats, because anybody who saw Bowe's final two fights, against Andrew Golota, and heard the way he spoke afterward knows he should never box again. I'm glad Bowe is out of jail, where he served 17 months for kidnapping his first wife and their children, but the last place I want to see him is in a boxing ring.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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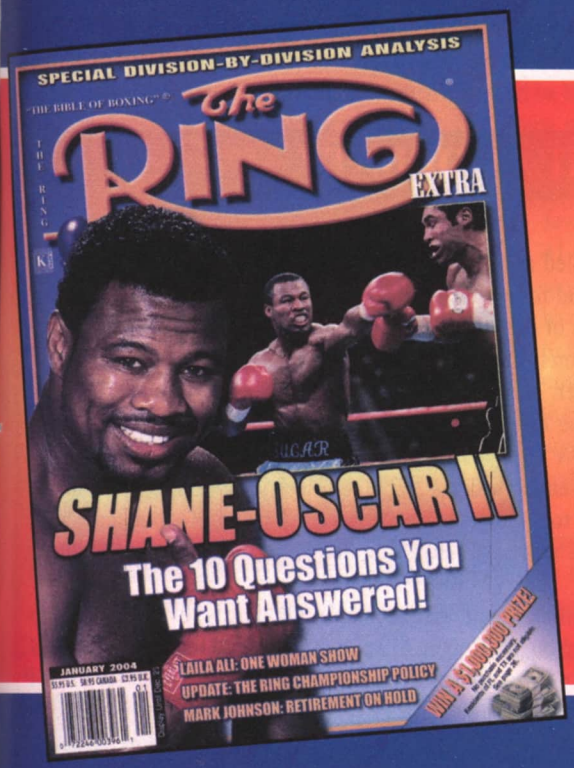

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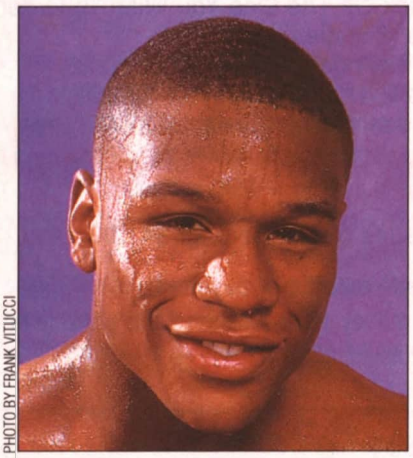
ROUND ONE

THE GREAT DEBATE

Whether it was because he was so skilled at ducking punches, so skilled at ducking dangerous fighters, or both, Roy Jones ruled the pound-for-pound roost for the better part of the last 10 years. But now that his proficiency at both forms of ducking has slipped, the top spot in the P4P rankings is undisputedly someone else's. The question is who that someone else is.

With all due respect to Antonio Tarver, there are really only two logical candidates, and as HBO's Larry Merchant revealed before the Floyd Mayweather-DeMarcus Corley fight, THE RING and *USA Today* are split on the issue. *USA Today* ranks Mayweather first, Bernard Hopkins second. THE RING ranks Hopkins first, Mayweather second. After the Corley fight, Merchant aligned himself with us and placed Hopkins at the top. Others in the media are divided. It's making for one of the hottest pound-for-pound debates since a then-rising Jones was nudging past Pernell Whitaker a decade ago.

But here at THE RING, we don't really think it's all that debatable. Obviously, everything is subject to change pending the outcome of Hopkins vs. Robert Allen, but going into that fight, Hopkins' recent dominance was truly extraordinary. Whenever possible, it's ideal for the P4P king to be that rare fighter who not only wins every fight—he wins every round. In his pound-for-pound prime, that was Jones, and before him, that was Whitaker. Now, that's Hopkins. Of the 54 rounds he's fought in his last five fights, "The Executioner" has lost perhaps two or three of them. That includes a fight with a then-undefeated living legend (Felix Trinidad) and three other bouts with respected, world-class foes (Keith Holmes, Carl Daniels, and William Joppy). This is the sort of recent form you want your pound-for-pound ruler to show.



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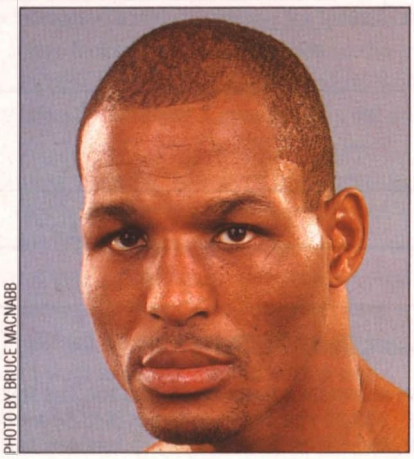


PHOTO BY BRUCE MACNABB

Mayweather vs. Hopkins: Who's your P4P pick?

Mayweather, meanwhile, has looked excellent in his last two fights (against Corley and Phillip Ndou), but just prior to that, he struggled in spots against fringe contender Victoriano Sosa, and lost arguably as many rounds as he won in two fights with Jose Luis Castillo. A supreme talent? Yes. Consistent enough to be The Man? No.

USA Today boxing writer Dan Rafael disagrees.

"I take a longer view when it comes to pound-for-pound," Rafael argued. "It's not just about what have you done for me lately; it's also about overall resume. To me, Floyd's resume is better overall against overall better opponents.

"If you want to argue that Mayweather struggled in the first Castillo fight, I would counter and say, fine, Hopkins was down twice in the first Segundo Mercado fight. Hopkins has one big-time win, against Trinidad. Mayweather has been stellar with Genaro Hernandez, Angel Manfredy, and Diego Corrales. In fact, Floyd fought three consecutive guys who later won titles—Corrales, Carlos Hernandez, and Jesus Chavez. How many fighters after losing to Hopkins went on to win major titles? The answer is one: Glen Johnson."

The flipside of that argument, however, is that Hopkins perhaps destroys fighters so thoroughly that they don't recover, while Mayweather beats them in such a way that they're able to come back in an undiminished state.

It's all in how you look at it. Which is why the boxing world is buzzing about this topic in the first place.

—Eric Raskin

CHAVEZ' FINAL FIGHT ... WE HOPE

They threw a retirement party for Julio Cesar Chavez and rented the Plaza de Toros in Mexico City for the occasion. Besides the guest of honor, they invited Chavez' old nemesis Frankie Randall. Naturally, they got into a fight, and much to the delight of the Chavez worshippers on hand, the aging Mexican icon hammered out a 10-round unanimous decision to edge ahead 2-1 in his three-bout series with the man who handed him his first professional defeat. Chavez promised it would be his last fight.

PHOTO BY JORGE UZON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Chavez battles Randall in "retirement" fight

Some would say that Don King, who peddled the fight via pay-per-view, was just trying to squeeze a few more dollars out of Chavez' 41-year-old carcass. But if it was indeed Chavez' final fight, it will have been worth it. Nobody wants to see the once-great Chavez seriously hurt or sully his legacy with the additional losses that would undoubtedly follow if he continued to compete.

Even though both fighters are way past their primes, they fought as hard as their battle-weary bodies would allow. Randall, 42, tried to capitalize on his jab and right cross, the weapons that carried him to victory in their first encounter, in 1994, while Chavez applied steady pressure, hooking away at the head and body.

It was a geriatric version of their earlier encounters (with Randall having slipped farther than Chavez), and even though it was a bit closer than the scores of 99-91 and 98-92 (twice) indicated, nobody claimed Randall was robbed. We can only hope that "The Surgeon" follows Chavez' example and hangs up his gloves.

"Thank you for so much love and so much affection and applause," Chavez, 106-5-2 (86), told the crowd afterward.

And thank you, Julio, for all the wonderful moments you've provided. We look forward to seeing you in Canastota five years from now.

—Nigel Collins

TAKE COVER!

Everyone's familiar with the *Sports Illustrated* jinx: athlete appears on the cover of *SI*, athlete's life/career spirals downward soon thereafter. And while boxers haven't been featured on the cover of *SI* much recently, look at some of the ones who've received major coverage in the last few years: Zab Judah, right before the Kostya Tszyu fight; Felix Trinidad, right before the Bernard Hopkins fight; Ricardo Mayorga, right before the Cory Spinks fight. Coincidence? The jinx theorists think not.

But the *SI* jinx has been nothing lately compared to the EA Sports jinx. The video game maker is on a staggering run with regard to its cover subjects finding disaster, and the latest example, Roy Jones, has the boxing world taking notice. Jones was on the cover of EA Sports' *Fight Night 2004*, and just a month after the release of the game, Jones got squashed by Antonio Tarver.

Jones wasn't the first boxer to fall victim to the EA jinx. Shane Mosley was the cover boy for *Knockout Kings 2001*, and it wasn't long before he went from undefeated pound-for-pound king to loser of three of his next five fights. Lennox Lewis graced the cover of *Knockout Kings 2003*, and seemed to grow old overnight as he struggled mightily with Vitali Klitschko, then retired.

The EA jinx has victimized numerous top athletes in other sports over the last few years, most notably in football, where Michael Vick, Marshall Faulk, Eddie George, and Daunte Culpepper all suffered injuries and/or had lousy seasons after appearing on EA covers. Vick, in fact, broke his leg the very next day after the game was released. And it doesn't get much creepier than hockey player Dany Heatley, who, just days after *NHL '04* was released with him on the cover, was involved in a car accident that left him seriously injured and facing vehicular manslaughter charges.

So, who wants to be the cover boy for *Fight Night 2005*? Anyone?

—Eric Raskin

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Jones fell victim to the EA Sports jinx

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
5-6-04	Choi Tsveenpurev W 8 Kevin O'Hara	Show	jl	C-	B+	C-
O'Hara's nickname is "Sweet Pea"? Pernell Whitaker should sue						
5-6-04	Thomas McDonagh W 12 Bradley Pryce	Show	jm	C	C+	B-
Pryce's late surge makes it fun but isn't enough to get him the win						
5-7-04	Leo Nolan W 12 Lou Savarese	ESPN2	h	C-	B-	C-
An old story; Savarese gets in great shape so he can throw four punches a round						
5-8-04	Francisco Trejo W 8 Darling Jimenez	NBC	jl	C	B+	C-
A guy named "Darling" should not be as easy to hit as Jimenez is						
5-8-04	Panchito Bojado W 10 Andre Eason	NBC	w	B-	B-	C+
How long before Floyd Mayweather Sr. starts sticking pins in a Buddy McGirt doll?						
5-8-04	Miguel Cotto W 12 Lovemore Ndou	HBO	jw	B+	B+	B
It's hard not to believe in Cotto now; this was a legitimate test and he passed it with high marks						
5-8-04	**Manny Pacquiao D 12 Juan Manuel Marquez**	**HBO**	**World f**	**A+**	**A+**	**A**
Every once in a while we get one that reminds us why we're fans; the rematch can't come soon enough						
5-13-04	Jhonny Gonzalez KO 6 Alejandro Montiel	HBO L	b	C+	B-	C+
Gonzalez showing good stuff; Montiel no easy mark, and Gonzalez took him apart						
5-13-04	**Julio Diaz W 12 Javier Jauregui**	**HBO L**	**IBF l**	**A-**	**A-**	**B-**
You could see this coming; Diaz a good young fighter who's paid some dues						
5-14-04	Peter Manfredo W 12 Anthony Bonsante	ESPN2	jm	C+	B+	C+
Decent win for Manfredo, who is a full level above tough but ordinary Bonsante						
5-15-04	Sergio Mora W 8 Les Ralston	NBC	m	C-	A-	C+
Mora has good moves for a young kid; if he can get some pop on his punches he could make some noise						
5-15-04	Calvin Brock W 10 Terry Smith	NBC	h	C+	B+	C-
Someone want to wake up Brock and tell him he might want to consider fighting hard when he's on network TV?						
5-15-04	**Victor Burgos KO 6 Fahlan Sakkreerin**	**PPV**	**IBF jfl**	**B+**	**B+**	**B-**
Burgos' draw with Rosendo Alvarez was no fluke						
5-15-04	Gerald Nobles KO 9 Bruce Seldon	PPV	h	C	B-	B
If he was going to quit, Seldon should've done it earlier … like before Nobles took his shirt off						
5-15-04	Zab Judah W 12 Rafael Pineda	PPV	w	B	C-	C+
Zab, Eddie Hopson called; he said he's been expecting you						
5-15-04	**Antonio Tarver KO 2 Roy Jones**	**PPV**	**World lh**	**A+**	**A**	**B+**
If we didn't see it, we still wouldn't believe it; we need the rubber match, Roy						
5-21-04	Juliano Ramos W 10 Moises Pedroza	ESPN2	l	C	B	C-
How much more mileage is Pedroza going to get out of his "former world title challenger" label?						
5-21-04	Art Simonyan W 12 Narongrit Pirang	ESPN2	jf	B-	C+	D+
Did the utter boredom affect our eyesight, or did these two look like they were in two different weight classes?						
5-21-04	Julio Gonzalez W 10 Olando Rivera	Telef	lh	B-	D-	C-
Gonzalez grinds out win over tough guy, but looks ordinary doing it						
5-22-04	Floyd Mayweather W 12 DeMarcus Corley	HBO	jw	A	B	B
If Corley hadn't resigned himself to the loss about halfway through, this might have been a lot more fun						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World/Alphabet title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino

"IN THIS CORNER ... "

Two minutes into David Mayo's career as a ring announcer, disaster struck. The top rope broke in the first round of the first fight, leaving him with 10 minutes to fill while the rope was repaired. It was the start of a bizarre night that later saw one of the boxers lose his trunks when the drawstring snapped, which prompted him to bump and grind his way around the ring in briefs and a protective cup—as his embarrassed handlers chased after him with a robe.

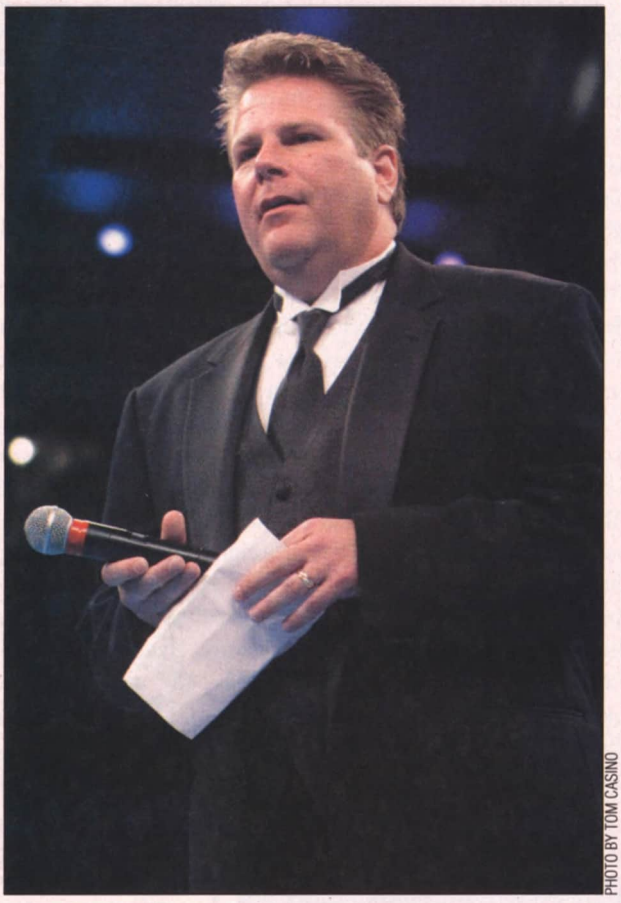


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

Mayo: RING writer and ring announcer

Regular readers probably recognize Mayo's name, as he is a frequent contributor to THE RING. He's also the boxing writer for the *Grand Rapids Press*, and had originally taken the ring announcer gig as a one-time thing to gather material for a newspaper column. But promoter Joel Langlois, who stages regular shows at the DeltaPlex in Grand Rapids, liked Mayo's work so much he invited him back on a regular basis. Recently, the 43-year-old Mayo made his Atlantic City debut, introducing the undercard bouts on the Floyd Mayweather-DeMarcus Corley show.

To avoid any perceived conflict of interest, Mayo donates his announcer fees to the Santa Claus Girls, a charity run by the *Grand Rapids Press* that assists underprivileged families during the Christmas/Hanukkah season.

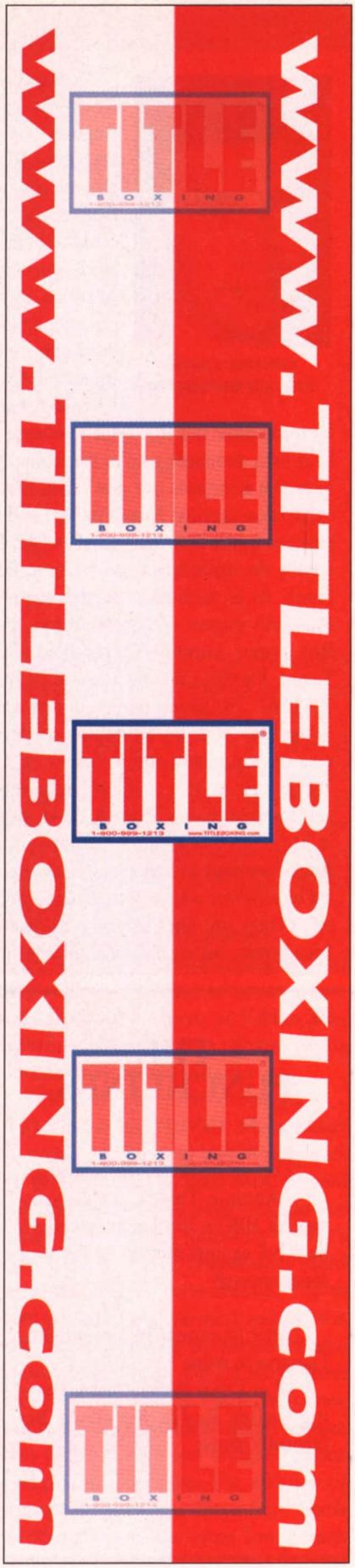
"I'm quick to point that out, lest anyone think I'm profiting from a promoter," said Mayo, who has raised approximately $2,200 for the newspaper charity.

Although Mayo has a deep, resonant voice, the only time he'd used it in a public forum before was back in his college radio days. Still, as a longtime boxing fan and a ringside regular, he had no trouble segueing from the keyboard to the microphone.

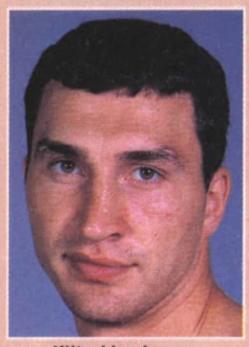
"It's not brain surgery, and besides, I'd seen so many fights I knew what to do," said Mayo. "After watching so many ring announcers over the years, you learn what you like and what you don't. But accuracy comes first."

That's a refreshing attitude in these days of catch phrases and filibuster-like introductions, but is exactly what you'd expect from somebody who writes about boxing as knowledgeably as Mayo.

—Nigel Collins

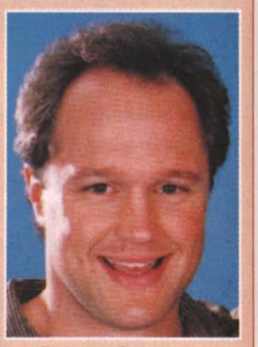


OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Klitschko: Lawyer demands investigation

In early-May, attorney **Judd Burstein** requested that **Daniel Bogden**, the U.S. Attorney for the District of Nevada, launch an investigation into the loss suffered by Burstein's client, **Wladimir Klitschko**, against **Lamon Brewster** in April. Burstein cited several points of suspicion, including the dramatic (but not uncommon) shift in the odds on the fight, a missing fight credential intended for a member of Team Klitschko but allegedly claimed by someone else, and the sudden collapse of Klitschko in a fight he'd been dominating up to that point. Not mentioned were the facts that Klitschko had previously lost a fight due partially to exhaustion (against **Ross Puritty**) and that he threw far more punches in the first four rounds of the fight than heavyweights usually do, especially when trying to finish Brewster off in the fourth. As of press time, Bogden had not publicly responded to Burstein's request … A week before hitting the jackpot against **Roy Jones**, **Antonio Tarver** filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy in Tampa, Florida, claiming he owed 20 creditors a total amount of $945,682. The largest portion of that was a $367,000 sum owed to the IRS. With his $2-million payday for the Jones rematch, plus more paydays sure to follow, it's generally assumed that Tarver will be able to dig his way out of the hole … Former heavyweight champ **Riddick Bowe** was in the news quite a bit in May. First, he dropped his lawsuit against former manager **Rock Newman** and apologized, saying, "I was lied to and misled by a former adviser into thinking you had stolen money from me." Then, just days later, the 36-year-old Bowe was released from prison, having done his time for the abduction of his former wife and his children … The former president of **Sugar Ray Leonard** Boxing, **Bjorn Rebney**, filed a $10-million lawsuit against the producers of *The Contender* in mid-May for allegedly enticing Leonard to terminate SRL Boxing and breach his agreement with Rebney in order to be a part of the NBC boxing reality show … In late-May, Las Vegas-based promoter Guilty Boxing began a series of weekly, Friday night boxing shows broadcast live on the Internet for a fee of $4.95 per month. While these are not the first fights ever shown on the Internet, there has never before been a regular boxing series presented in this format. The broadcasts, available in English and Spanish, are produced by CMXsports … In late-May, Oregon Boxing and Wrestling Commission Executive Director **Jim Cassidy** was fired in the midst of an investigation into his role in an October '03 fight card in which promoter **Beve Dowlen** bounced checks to fighters and officials. Cassidy has been accused of bending rules to allow the show to go on … Former bantamweight titlist and current RING contributor **Wayne McCullough** legally changed his name to **Wayne "Pocket Rocket" McCullough** in mid-May … Massachusetts super middleweight **Dave Hamilton** died in a car crash in mid-May at the age of 33. Hamilton's four-year-old son **Marcus** also died in the accident, which saw Hamilton's SUV veer off the road and strike a tree. Hamilton, nicknamed "The Hammer," had a record of 15-12-2 (5), including losses to **Jermain Taylor**, **Eric Harding**, and **Glencoffe Johnson** (all by second-round knockout). Hamilton was still an active fighter at the time of his death, having competed three times already in 2004.



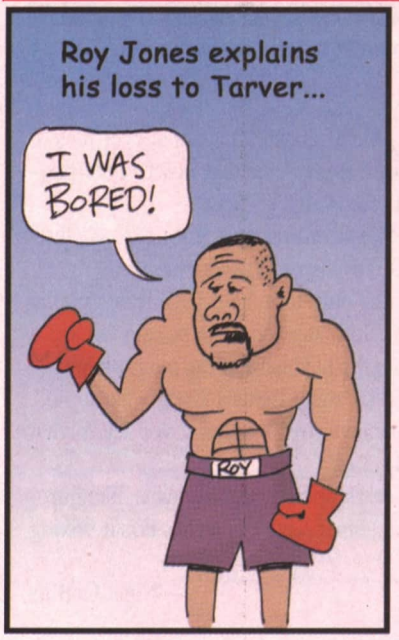
Rebney: Suing after losing Leonard

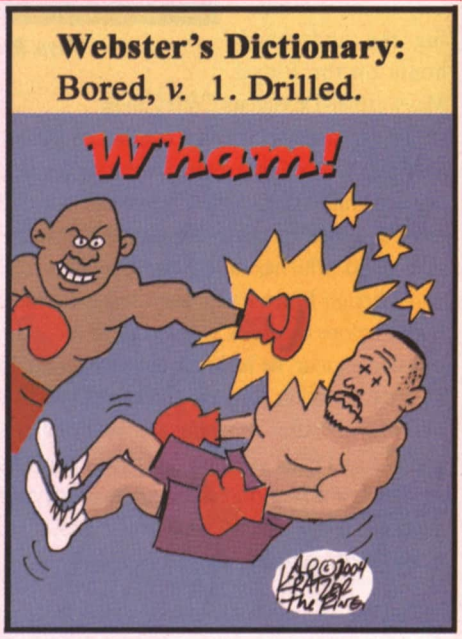
THE PUNCHLINES

"I bet on Jones … Smarty Jones!"
—Antonio Tarver, temporarily making HBO's Jim Lampley believe he'd bet against himself in the Roy Jones rematch

"After [covering] 16 Tyson fights, I deserve to retire."
—*Las Vegas Review-Journal* boxing writer Royce Feour, in his farewell column

AL KRATZER'S VIEW





"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Junior Welterweight
3. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Light Heavyweight
4. **ROY JONES**
   Light Heavyweight
5. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Junior Middleweight
6. **WINKY WRIGHT**
   Junior Middleweight
7. **ERIK MORALES**
   Junior Lightweight
8. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Featherweight
9. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Featherweight
10. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
    Junior Welterweight

(For period ended May 26, 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Steve Cunningham debuts at number seven due to his victory over Sebastian Rothman, who held that position in the last issue. Rothman departs.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Antonio Tarver (first last issue) is now world champion by virtue of his knockout of Roy Jones, who assumes Tarver's old spot. Eric Harding (sixth last issue) exits due to the fact he hasn't fought in more than a year. Harding's departure allows Clinton Woods (seventh last issue) and Fabrice Tiozzo (eighth last issue) to each advance one spot, and creates a hole, which is filled by Stipe Drews, now aboard at number eight. Rico Hoye is also new, replacing Richard Hall, whom he knocked out, at the number-10 position.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Sergey Tatevosyan (sixth last issue) is gone after being bumped off by undistinguished Koren Gevor. This moves everybody ranked below Tatevosyan up one position and makes room for newcomer Sam Soliman at number 10.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Floyd Mayweather debuts at number five due to his win over DeMarcus Corley (fifth last issue). Corley slips to sixth, which pushes down everybody rated below him last issue one rung. Juan Valenzuela (10th last issue) is squeezed out.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: With Mayweather (champ last issue) having moved up to junior welterweight, the lightweight title is now vacant. THE RING will recognize the winner of the scheduled June 5 match between number-one rated Juan Lazcano and number two Jose Luis Castillo as the new champion. Also, Julio Diaz (sixth last issue) and Javier Jauregui (fifth last issue) trade places due to Diaz' decision victory over Jauregui.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Nedal Hussein (ninth last issue) is now campaigning as a junior lightweight. His departure bumps up Jorge Lacierva (10th last issue) one notch and makes room for Art Simonyan at number 10.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Previously unranked Ratanachai Vorapin jumps into the fourth spot on the strength of his win over Cruz Carbajal, who falls from third to sixth. Johnny Bredahl (fourth last issue) advances to third. Everybody ranked sixth or below last issue drops one spot each, and Mauricio Martinez (10th last issue) exits.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: Victor Burgos (third last issue) advances to second following his kayo of Fahlan Sakkreerin, which pushes down Bebis Mendoza from second to third.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: Major shakeup, starting with the top spot, which Jones had held since the July 2003 issue. Bernard Hopkins (second last issue) regains the number-one position following Tarver's kayo of Jones. Floyd Mayweather (third last issue) moves up to second, Tarver (10th last issue) leaps to third, and Jones is now fourth. Tarver's advancement also pushes down Oscar De La Hoya from fourth to fifth. Manny Pacquiao's draw with Juan Manuel Marquez drops Pacquiao from fifth to eighth and brings Marquez aboard at number nine. The addition of Marquez drops Kostya Tszyu from eighth to 10th and shoves out James Toney (ninth last issue). ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended May 26, 2004

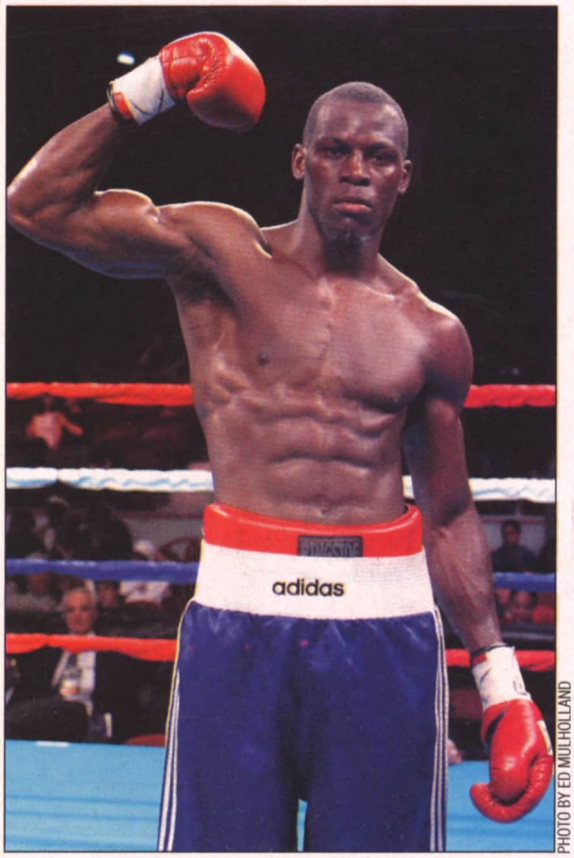


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Steve Cunningham crashed the cruiserweight rankings by beating Sebastian Rothman

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: VITALI KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 34-2 (33)

1. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 37-2-1 (20)
2. **JOHN RUIZ**
Methuen, MA 40-5-1 (28)
3. **JAMES TONEY**
Ann Arbor, MI 67-4-2 (43)
4. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 37-5-1 (30)
5. **MONTE BARRETT**
Queens, NY 30-3 (16)
6. **ANDREW GOLOTA**
Poland 38-4-1 (31)
7. **FRES OQUENDO**
Puerto Rico 24-3 (15)
8. **LAMON BREWSTER**
Los Angeles, CA 30-2 (27)
9. **JAMEEL McCLINE**
Port Jefferson, NY 31-3-1 (19)
10. **JOE MESI**
Tonawanda, NY 29-0 (25)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: WINKY WRIGHT
St. Petersburg, FL 47-3 (25)

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
Los Angeles, CA 36-3 (29)
2. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 39-3 (35)
3. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 24-2 (22)
4. **KASSIM OUMA**
W. Palm Beach, FL 19-1-1 (13)
5. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
Aurora, CO 37-9-1 (19)
6. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 57-5 (39)
7. **DANIEL SANTOS**
Puerto Rico 28-2-1 (20)
8. **TRAVIS SIMMS**
Norwalk, CT 23-0 (18)
9. **J.C. CANDELO**
Colombia 27-6-3 (19)
10. **BRONCO McKART**
Monroe, MI 46-5 (30)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: MANNY PACQUIAO
Philippines 38-2-2 (29)

1. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 42-2-1 (33)
2. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
Mexico 57-4 (40)
3. **SCOTT HARRISON**
Scotland 21-2-1 (11)
4. **INJIN CHI**
South Korea 28-2-1 (17)
5. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 62-14 (28)
6. **DERRICK GAINER**
Pensacola, FL 39-6-1 (24)
7. **WILLIAM ABELYAN**
Glendale, CA 23-4-1 (12)
8. **MICHAEL BRODIE**
England 35-2-1 (23)
9. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
Houston, TX 20-0 (14)
10. **ZAHIR RAHEEM**
Tulsa, OK 25-0 (15)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 51-3-1 (35)
2. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 36-3 (27)
3. **MAHYAR MONSHIPOUR**
France 24-2-2 (15)
4. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 21-0 (17)
5. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA**
Venezuela 24-3-1 (14)
6. **SALIM MEDJKOUNE**
France 43-4-1 (21)
7. **OSAMU SATO**
Japan 27-2-3 (16)
8. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG**
Thailand 36-1-1 (19)
9. **JORGE LACIERVA**
Mexico 25-5-4 (17)
10. **ART SIMONYAN**
Glendale, CA 14-0-1 (7)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 31-3 (28)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 43-1-2 (30)
3. **JOHNNY BREDAHL**
Denmark 55-2 (26)
4. **RATANACHAI VORAPIN**
Thailand 56-8 (38)
5. **GENARO GARCIA**
Mexico 31-4 (19)
6. **CRUZ CARBAJAL**
Mexico 24-12-1 (20)
7. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 23-4-3 (14)
8. **HERIBERTO RUIZ**
Mexico 30-2-2 (13)
9. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 15-0 (14)
10. **RICARDO VARGAS**
Mexico 36-10-3 (11)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
   Guyana 21-0 (17)
2. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
   France 30-2 (21)
3. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 43-12-2 (28)
4. **O'NEIL BELL**
   Atlanta, GA 22-1-1 (21)
5. **KELVIN DAVIS**
   Reno, NV 21-2-1 (16)
6. **CARL THOMPSON**
   England 32-6 (24)
7. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
   Philadelphia, PA 15-0 (8)
8. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 49-5 (23)
9. **DALE BROWN**
   Canada 30-3-1 (20)
10. **PIETRO AURINO**
    Italy 28-2 (13)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ANTONIO TARVER
Orlando, FL 22-2 (18)

1. **ROY JONES**
   Pensacola, FL 49-2 (38)
2. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
   Hungary 20-0 (13)
3. **GLENCOFFE JOHNSON**
   Miami, FL 40-9-2 (27)
4. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 36-2 (22)
5. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 48-1 (38)
6. **CLINTON WOODS**
   England 35-3-1 (21)
7. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
   Franco 46-2 (30)
8. **STIPE DREWS**
   Croatia 26-0 (12)
9. **SILVIO BRANCO**
   Italy 49-7-2 (30)
10. **RICO HOYE**
    Detroit, MI 17-0 (14)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 37-0 (30)
2. **MANNY SIACA**
   Puerto Rico 18-4 (16)
3. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
   Australia 20-2 (15)
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 30-5-1 (26)
5. **DANNY GREEN**
   Australia 18-1 (17)
6. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 25-3-1 (18)
7. **MARKUS BEYER**
   Germany 29-1 (11)
8. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 40-9 (28)
9. **MADS LARSEN**
   Denmark 45-2 (37)
10. **ROBIN REID**
    England 36-4-1 (27)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 43-2-1 (31)

1. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 39-1 (35)
2. **ROBERT ALLEN**
   Atlanta, GA 36-4 (27)
3. **RODNEY JONES**
   Lafayette, LA 32-3 (21)
4. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 34-3-1 (25)
5. **JERMAIN TAYLOR**
   Little Rock, AR 20-0 (15)
6. **MASELINO MASOE**
   New Zealand 26-2 (25)
7. **FELIX STURM**
   Germany 20-0 (9)
8. **KINGSLEY IKEKE**
   Canada 19-1 (10)
9. **RAYMOND JOVAL**
   Netherlands 32-2 (14)
10. **SAM SOLIMAN**
    Australia 25-7 (8)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: CORY SPINKS
St. Louis, MO 33-2 (11)

1. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 30-3 (21)
2. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 35-2 (26)
3. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 31-2 (22)
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 34-0 (26)
5. **MICHELE PICCIRILLO**
   Italy 41-2 (25)
6. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
   Mexico 25-10-1 (18)
7. **TEDDY REID**
   Adelphi, MD 22-5-1 (16)
8. **JAWAID KHALIQ**
   England 23-1-1 (13)
9. **JOSE RIVERA**
   Worcester, MA 37-3-1 (24)
10. **CARLOS BALDOMIR**
    Argentina 40-9-6 (12)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU
Australia 30-1 (24)

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 54-3 (30)
2. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 37-6 (28)
3. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
   Brooklyn, NY 24-1-1 (16)
4. **RICKY HATTON**
   England 35-0 (26)
5. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 32-0 (21)
6. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 28-3-1 (16)
7. **OKTAY URKAL**
   Germany 34-2 (10)
8. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 20-0 (16)
9. **LOVEMORE NDOU**
   Australia 38-7-1 (24)
10. **JUNIOR WITTER**
    England 28-1-2 (17)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JUAN LAZCANO**
   El Paso, TX 33-2-1 (25)
2. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
   Mexico 49-6-1 (45)
3. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 35-3-1 (17)
4. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 35-0 (31)
5. **JULIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 30-2 (22)
6. **JAVIER JAUREGUI**
   Mexico 47-11-2 (34)
7. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 36-1 (22)
8. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France 56-3-2 (41)
9. **LAKVA SIM**
   Mongolia 19-3-1 (16)
10. **JUAN DIAZ**
    Houston, TX 24-0 (12)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **DIEGO CORRALES**
   Sacramento, CA 38-2 (31)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 30-2 (19)
3. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico 46-1 (34)
4. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 40-3 (28)
5. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
   Bellflower, CA 40-3-1 (24)
6. **STEVE FORBES**
   Las Vegas, NV 23-2 (6)
7. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
   Thailand 42-2-1 (35)
8. **JORGE BARRIOS**
   Argentina 41-2-1 (29)
9. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
   Mexico 20-8-1 (13)
10. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
    South Africa 29-1 (16)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 30-2-1 (8)
2. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. 43-3 (28)
3. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
   Venezuela 25-0 (24)
4. **LUIS PEREZ**
   Nicaragua 22-1 (14)
5. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 28-1-1 (22)
6. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
   Mexico 26-1 (16)
7. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 22-5-1 (11)
8. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 31-4-1 (21)
9. **JOSE NAVARRO**
   Los Angeles, CA 20-0 (8)
10. **ERIC MOREL**
    Madison, WI 34-1 (18)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 51-2 (27)
2. **LORENZO PARRA**
   Venezuela 22-0 (17)
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 28-0 (21)
4. **MZUKISI SIKALI**
   South Africa 28-4-2 (17)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 16-0-2 (10)
6. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Australia 21-0 (16)
7. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
   France 15-0 (6)
8. **HUSSEIN HUSSEIN**
   Australia 25-1 (19)
9. **LUIS MALDONADO**
   Mexico 28-0 (20)
10. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
    Japan 22-1-1 (9)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: ROSENDO ALVAREZ
Nicaragua 32-2-2 (21)

1. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 36-3-1 (27)
2. **VICTOR BURGOS**
   Mexico 37-13-3 (22)
3. **BEIBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 29-2 (23)
4. **NELSON DIEPPA**
   Puerto Rico 20-2-2 (12)
5. **PICHIT SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 29-2 (14)
6. **FAHLAN SAKKREERIN**
   Thailand 50-4-2 (20)
7. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia 35-3 (21)
8. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico 13-0 (9)
9. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ**
   Panama 15-1 (13)
10. **HUGO CAZARES**
    Mexico 18-3-1 (14)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 20-2-1 (10)
2. **EAGLE AKAKURA**
   Japan 12-0 (5)
3. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 34-1-1 (29)
4. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 31-2-1 (19)
5. **YUTAKA NIIDA**
   Japan 15-1-3 (8)
6. **IVAN CALDERON**
   Puerto Rico 19-0 (3)
7. **JUAN LANDAETA**
   Venezuela 15-2-1 (13)
8. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 50-2-3 (17)
9. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
   Indonesia 48-7-3 (21)
10. **ISAAC BUSTOS**
    Mexico 22-6-3 (11)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

SUPER EMERITUS INTERIM UNIFIED CHAMP

At this stage, trashing the hapless and hopeless alphabet ruling bodies isn't like beating a dead horse. It's more like repeatedly stomping a bottle of glue that had been made from the aforementioned equine carcass. Nonetheless, just as we never seem to reach our limit of Kiss farewell tours or Bernard Hopkins-Robert Allen fights, this column hasn't reached its limit of anti-alphabet tirades. As a matter of fact, it's not even close.

Sure, there's a strong temptation—especially in light of THE RING's Championship Policy—to simply ignore once and for all the doings of the disorganizations that have tried their damnedest to destroy a truly great sport, and to convince myself that the Gilberto Mendozas, Bob Lees, and Jose Sulaimen were just scary creations of a vivid imagination. (Sort of like the monsters Little Jeffy once thought hid inside his bedroom radiator.) The temptation comes at me like a Manny Pacquiao first-round assault, but like Juan Manuel Marquez, I survive it, fight back furiously, and stand tall at the finish.

Fools should *never* be suffered gladly, so the WBA, WBC, IBF, and WBO (and whatever other letter

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Any group that strips Winky is just stripping itself of a real champion

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

If you want to kill boxing's fan base, keep calling Brewster a heavyweight "champ"

combination rents office space these days) can take note: My attacks on their greed, stupidity, and self-interest won't end until each of them draws their last sanctioning check or J. Ryan draws his last breath, whichever comes first.

One day in late-April, it seemed as though that final breath of mine was at hand. That's when your columnist nearly had a stroke after hearing that junior middleweight king Winky Wright (who happened to hold the WBA, WBC, and IBF crowns in addition to THE RING belt) had been stripped of his IBF title. Now, granted, a champion being stripped by any of those groups of bogus, belt-bestowing boneheads is nothing new. But, for goodness sake, repossessing Wright's IBF strap so soon after his brilliant defeat of Shane Mosley was particularly stupid and poorly timed.

For starters, Wright has always been good to the IBF, a sanctioning body whose friends could all fit inside a four-man tent. As the IBF's 154-pound king, he made five defenses within 25 months, a busy schedule for a titlist at any weight. All of that was forgotten, however, when Wright neglected to race over to one of the judges moments after the Mosley fight, grab the guy's pen out of his hand, and use it to enthusiastically sign a contract to face mandatory contender Kassim Ouma. What was Wright thinking?! Uh, probably that he finally had some real leverage for the first time in his career and might be able to secure a showdown with unretiring superstar Felix Trinidad.

Never mind that Wright (super nice guy and 14-year veteran who gave a career-best performance against Mosley) is one of the feel-good stories of 2004 and does any organization whose crown he wears proud. Never mind, too, that Mosley is evoking a rematch clause that was in their original contract and that there's a lot more money in Wright-Mosley II than there is in Wright-Ouma I. What *really* makes the IBF honchos look like the biggest boobs this side of Kate Winslet's is that they're allowing their heavyweight titlist, Chris Byrd, to bypass *his* mandatory obligation with Jameel McCline in order to pursue a rematch with Andrew Golota. (Byrd's promoter, Don King, reportedly paid $20,000 for the exception.) How's that for consistency?

Amazing, isn't it, that after all of these years of nonsensical ratings and undeserving contenders, the corruption scandal involving Lee, the WBC's defeats in the courtroom, the bad press, ESPN ignoring alphabet designations during its telecasts, and on and on, the ruling bodies not only haven't gone out of business, but have become even more entrenched? Hell, the lowly WBO, which for years wasn't deemed worthy of being mentioned with "The Big Three," now receives equal billing from some columnists. We now read repeated references to "four" heavyweight kings, with WBO ruler Lamon Brewster mentioned along with Byrd, John Ruiz, and real champion Vitali Klitschko.

Give the alphabets, particularly the WBA and WBC, credit, though. As they march boldly into the 21st century, they're not content to chip away at what's left of the game's integrity with the same chisels they used in the past. No, they're forever evolving and displaying their creative side. The establishment of the super champion designation (since renamed "unified champion") and emeritus champion to go along with the interim champion, Intercontinental champion, and regular garden variety world champion, now assures that even a boxing writer who has covered the beat for 21 years isn't always sure what all of that jabber's jabberwocky means.

(And if I can't remember how an emeritus champ differs from an interim titlist, then how is the adolescent who's just taking an interest in the game going to understand the distinction? More to the point, will he care? Or will he simply switch to the NBA playoffs, where only one world champion is crowned and there's no confusion?)

Remember when the WBA wouldn't even acknowledge a rival organization's champion? If a guy held, say an IBF crown, the WBA didn't even rate him. Now, a fighter who holds a WBA belt and one of the others is labeled a WBA unified champ. So content to devalue championships and confuse the hell out of us is the WBA that it's now even willing to take a deep breath, swallow hard, and reward its rivals.

If only HBO and Showtime followed ESPN's example and ignored the Bad Housekeeping seal of approval the alphabet boys stamp on a fight, maybe we wouldn't have to hear the dreaded names WBA, WBC, IBF, and WBO ever again. Of course, that would mean the cable giants couldn't advertise whatever they've purchased as a "world title" fight, no matter that the damn thing is watered down worse than the rum-and-Cokes on three-for-one drink night.

Go ahead and strip Winky Wright. He's too good to walk around with an IBF (or a WBA or WBC) prefix attached to him anyway. He takes the game too seriously and is too worthy of our respect to be laughed at when he's introduced as a "WBA super welterweight super champ." A rematch with Mosley or a crack at Trinidad wouldn't be any more intriguing if it took place with a paper title at stake.

Thanks, alphabet gang. You've managed to raise my blood pressure for the 4,987th time in the past 21 years. But you know what? I'm still in my ranting and raving prime. If you guys are the stupor champions, then I'm your mandatory challenger. And I don't have any intention of losing my rating.

Protect yourselves at all times. ■

DIGGING DEEP

By Ivan Goldman

TWO-YEAR-OLD CONTROVERSY WON'T DIE

A little four-rounder held more than two years ago in Anaheim, California, seemed like no big deal when it went on the schedule. But that match between Joey Torres, making his pro debut, and Perry Williams, who came in with a record of 0-1, turned out to be a mighty depth charge that's still setting off secondary explosions in the world of boxing.

Promoter Bob Arum, by letting ex-convict Torres stick his toe into the business, unknowingly breathed extra life into a federal investigation of Arum's Top Rank company. He set the wheels in motion for a guilty plea by manager Robert Mittleman on two felony counts. He stoked the fires of a rebellion against the California commission, and he gave extra impetus to a bill by Senator John McCain to create a federal boxing agency to police the sport.

Along with a few thousand scattered fans, I was at the infamous bout on April 27, 2002, at the Arrowhead Pond. Befitting the ugly trail it left behind, it was an ugly night.

Torres, a convicted murderer whose real name was Kim Joseph Torrey, had emerged from 22 years in the pen pleading with Arum to let him resume his boxing career, which he said had been rudely interrupted by a bum homicide rap. Arum said yes to Torrey-Torres, who was extremely convincing.

Arum got his publicity machine to churn out a tale of a poor guy who'd been locked up more than 20 years for something he probably didn't do and who was trying to resume his promising athletic career. From as far away as Boston, boxing columnists who never laid eyes on him repeated the sob story that the ex-con told Arum who told it to his publicists who told it to the boxing writers who told it to their unsuspecting readers.

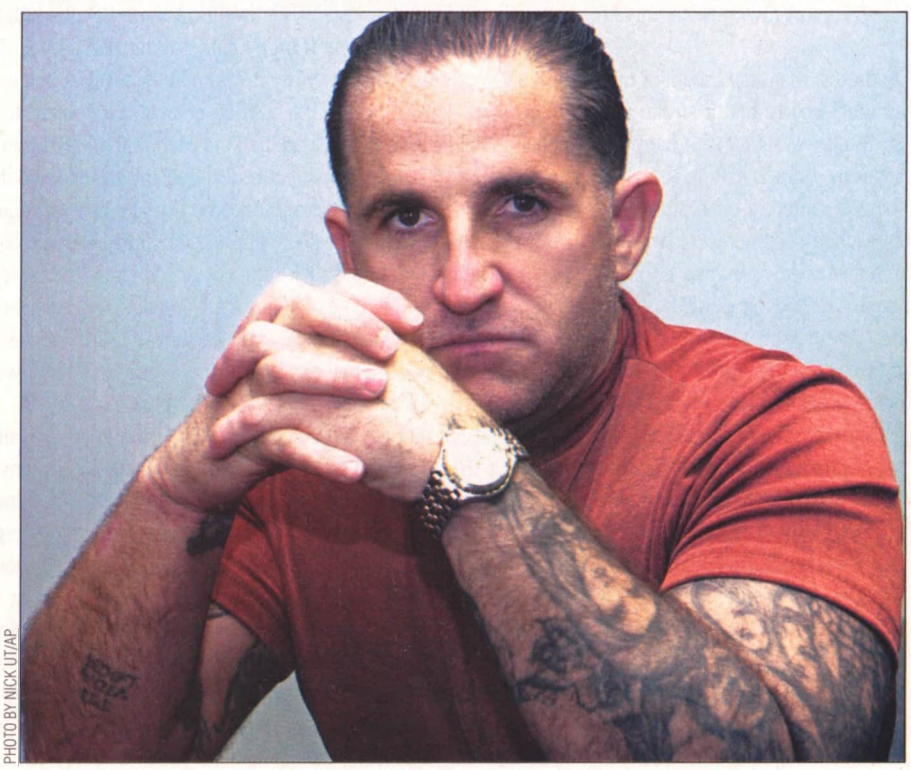


PHOTO BY NICK UT/AP

Convicted murderer Torres is the central figure in a squalid scandal

At fight time, when Torrey-Torres entered the ring, fans were aghast. He was a light heavy who stood about 5'5". His 41-year-old body had the look of a weeping willow. Everything hung south. Compared to this guy, Butterbean looks like Bernard Hopkins.

As they touched gloves to begin, Torrey-Torres, proving just what a sweet, framed guy he was, tried to sucker punch Williams. Most fans, if they watch enough fights, will eventually see bites, headbutts, rabbit punches, swings after the bell,

you name it. But when's the last time you saw anyone throw a punch while touching gloves with his opponent? It's so low down and dirty, not even Joel Casamayor has pulled it—*so far*.

Williams got angry and punched Torrey-Torres, who immediately went down. After he somehow beat the count, he wobbled like a drunk on a train. Williams carried him the rest of the round and fell down a couple times himself, ostensibly from punches. The fans screamed in frenzied disgust. It all looked like something from a very stupid, very old movie. At ringside, Arum looked a little sick.

Somehow, I don't recall exactly how, Torrey-Torres was awarded a kayo victory in round two. Out in the audience, *everyone* yelled obscenities. If Mother Teresa were alive and in the stands, she'd have done the same. How much is a fight fan supposed to take? Arum immediately promised the two fighters would never appear on another Top Rank card.

Later that night, Torrey-Torres went out in the stands and fans screamed obscenities at him all over again. He snarled. His face began to look like the face of, well, an angry murderer. As he made his way toward one fan in particular, security guards intervened.

In the days that followed, the state commission put out conflicting stories on its reaction to the fiasco. Nobody would say if purses were withheld or a serious investigation was launched. In the meantime, Torrey-Torres told the *Los Angles Times* he had hepatitis C and nearly no vision in one eye. The story, though, gets even uglier.

At some point prior to the Williams match, Torrey-Torres introduced Top Rank matchmaker Sean Gibbons and others to a "Big Frankie Manzione." Big Frankie was actually an NYPD detective on loan to the Justice Department, posing as a mob-connected fence seeking to break into the boxing biz. When Big Frankie showed up, the feds were already investigating alleged mismatches, fixes, and phony records, and identities connected to fighters on Top Rank cards.

Torrey-Torres allegedly gave Big Frankie cover so the FBI would help him stay out of the pen. But as I wrote this, he was back inside anyway. The L.A. prosecutor successfully appealed a ruling that set aside the guilty plea Torrey-Torres had entered at age 19 for first-degree murder in the death of a gas station attendant he says was his boxing manager.

Eventually the Justice Department tore off Big Frankie's cover and raided Top Rank offices, where it seized a number of documents. Gibbons was fired. Later, when public interest in the investigation flagged, unnamed investigators informed certain newspaper reporters that indictments were on the way. Like clever parrots, the reporters, mostly from the *Los Angeles Times* and the New York *Daily News*, kept reporting it.

At least one inside tipster claimed Oscar De La Hoya vs. Shane Mosley II was "fixed." But how do you fix a fight involving more than $20-million in purse money? Straight arrows Mosley and De La Hoya would rather win than earn a billion dollars in bribes. This was a joke.

Anonymous investigators, evidently seeing their error, then said some fights of Jorge Paez and Butterbean had been fixed. To my knowledge they never retracted the statement about Mosley and De La Hoya, whose names they'd besmirched.

Finally, another fighter named Williams—heavyweight Thomas Williams—was indicted for allegedly throwing fights. This is where manager Mittleman comes in. He pleaded guilty to paying Big Frankie $3,000 as a down payment toward quashing the indictment against Williams. The money, Mittleman thought, was going up the line to a judge and a federal prosecutor.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Bob Arum promoted Torres' lone pro fight

Don Fraser, widely respected as a former promoter and ex-commission director, was aghast. Ultimately, he led a group of insurgent boxing regulars who appealed to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. What bothered Fraser's group most was what the commission *didn't* do. It didn't turn the facts about that infamous Pond fight over to prosecutors.

"I remember back when Art Aragon was just accused of taking a fixed fight in Texas," Fraser told me. This was back around the 1950s, when, we are told, police and boxing officials were corrupt, not the saintly beings they are now. "He was looking for an easy tune-up," Fraser said.

Local prosecutors, tipped by the state commission, swarmed over Aragon like angry bees. The extremely popular L.A. lightweight and welterweight just barely avoided going to prison for an alleged fixed fight that was never fought.

In a letter to the governor, Fraser's group also complained that "for the first time since 1939," the state has not one African-American referee. It pointed out that in 1998, when a class of new officials received appointments, four of the nine were sons of commission officials. The group supports McCain's bill, which already cleared the Senate.

The commission's executive officer, Rob Lynch, who shows up at matches only rarely, "has no interest in boxing," Fraser said. Chief inspector Dean Lohuis runs things.

The Torrey-Torres affair likely sank Lohuis' bid to be the next executive director. Number one on the list to replace Lynch is referee Pat Russell, who holds a day job as an investigator for the San Diego District Attorney.

Meanwhile, if those additional indictments ever come down, prosecutors better have evidence more solid than the testimony of Torrey-Torres. If he told me it was raining outside, I'd get out the sun block. ■

CAMERA CLICKS

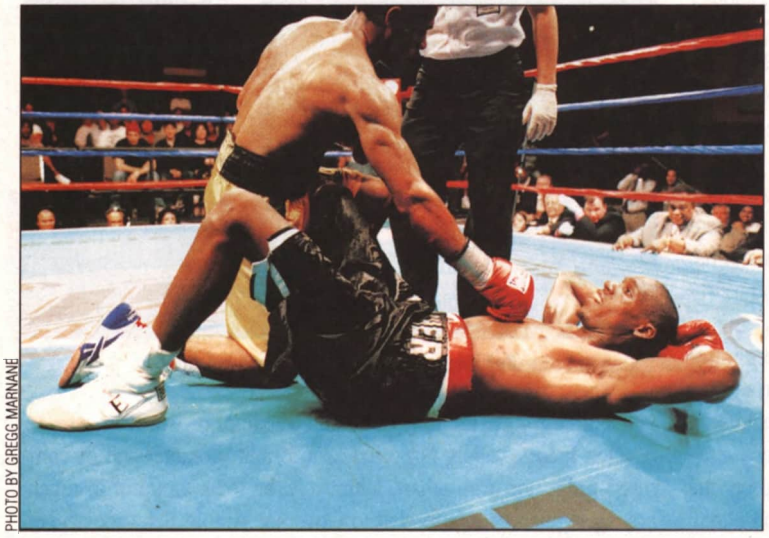


PHOTO BY GREGG MARNANE

Junior middleweight prospect Paul Williams demonstrates the absolute worst defensive form imaginable: flat on your back, with your hands behind your head. Luis Hernandez took advantage of the opening to score with a right hand to the body, though it doesn't look like the most vicious of blows.

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

If you've ever wondered how fighters can put on so much weight in such a short time span between the weigh-in and the fight, here's Manny Pacquiao to demonstrate the one-word answer: buffet. From the looks of the eager smile on his face, it's a miracle the world featherweight champion didn't enter his bout with Juan Manuel Marquez as a cruiserweight.

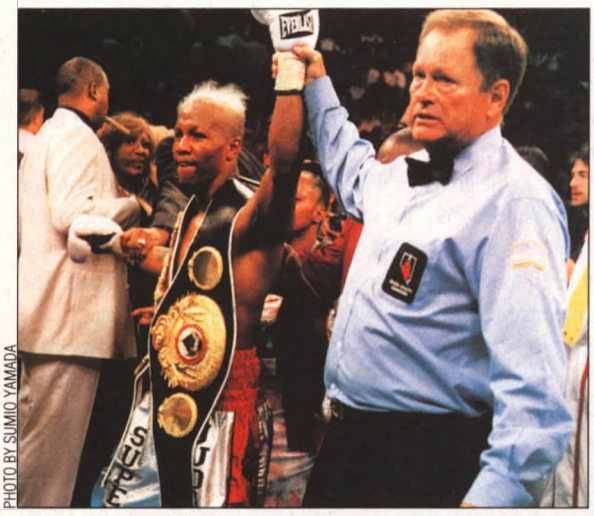


PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Zab Judah's fight with Rafael Pineda in May must have been a hair-raising experience—how else could you explain the white locks that suddenly sprouted from Judah's scalp following the bout? It's actually not a bad look for Zab; maybe he ought to stand directly in front of his promoter, Don King, more often.

PHOTO BY GREGG MARNANE

Even in his late-40s, Sugar Ray Leonard can still reel in the ladies. Either that, or they're all using him to get closer to Sylvester Stallone.

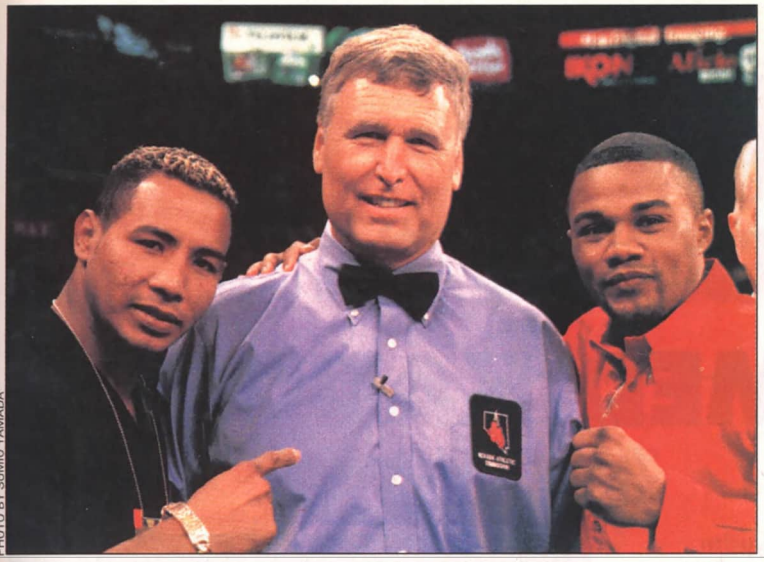


PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

It's never too soon to get your prefight instructions, which is why veteran Nevada referee Jay Nady gathered Ricardo Mayorga and Felix Trinidad together in May, a full five months before their scheduled fight. No truth to the rumor that Nady also called a halt to the bout a full five months before it started.

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

The 5'7" Juan Manuel Marquez and the 5'6" Manny Pacquiao have never stood so tall. The night of their fight at the MGM Grand, however, nobody took a more prominent position along the Vegas strip than these two.

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Antonio Tarver had no idea that just seconds after winning his boxing match with Roy Jones, he'd have to compete in a wrestling match with one of his cornermen. Tarver managed to shake off the effects of this belly-to-back suplex, but he didn't recover quite as quickly after Larry Merchant blasted him with a steel chair to the head moments later.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

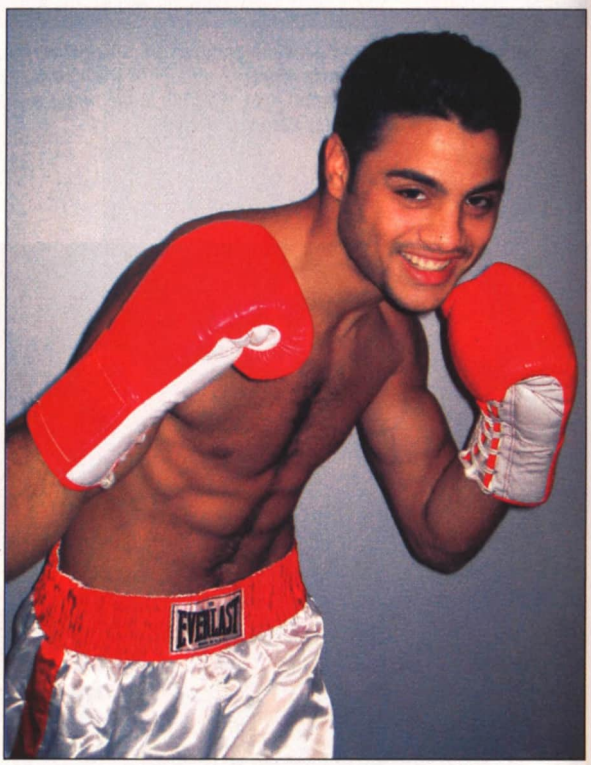
Before there was Sesame Street, *most kids learned to count by watching featherweight champions gather. Here, (left to right) Johnny Dundee, Louis "Kid" Kaplan, Battling Battalino, and Willie Pep are seen at a 1942 banquet in Hartford, Connecticut, brushing up on their math skills.*

NEW FACES

AHMED KADDOUR

Junior Middleweight

By Joe Santoliquito



Ahmed "Babyface" Kaddour doesn't remember the bright incubator lights, or the way his tiny body pulsated with each breath. He doesn't remember the battery of life-support monitors, the small wires attached to his stomach and chest, or the nodding, shadowy figures looking down.

Kaddour can't recall the war that was being waged outside his hospital room either, in his native Lebanon, while he was waging his personal battle to stay alive.

But that was Kaddour 22 years ago, struggling for life. The feisty infant was born four months premature, and doctors told his mother there wasn't much of a chance of little Ahmed surviving. He weighed less than two pounds, a "small chicken" in the words of his mother, tiny enough to fit in the palm of someone's hand.

Kaddour was far too young to have any memories of his birth and the ensuing struggle for survive. Still, when asked where the fight in him comes from, he channels some sort of recollection of that time. It's almost as if he's describing someone else. But that was him, a small and frail infant.

Now a handsome, 6'1" junior middleweight, Kaddour, 17-0 (8), is anything but small and frail. He dismisses any suggestion of vulnerability, because he's a fighter. He's been a fighter all of his life.

"Now I'm very strong," said Kaddour in broken English. "All my life right now depends on what I went through then as a baby. I've also been fortunate for all the people taking me in when I was growing up. I survived from a war and came to Europe, and now I'm going against American fighters in the United States. I was a natural fighter, because I was always fighting between life and death."

Kaddour lived in Lebanon for one year before his parents decided to get out of that war-torn area of the world and move to Denmark. Though he didn't have the constant struggle of life-and-death tugging at him every day as he did in Lebanon, Kaddour still had to endure conflict once he and his family moved. It took some time for the dark child to assimilate and make friends in an all-white Danish school.

"I was the youngest one and the smallest

(Continued on page 115)

PRO RECORD

2000		
Oct. 7	Attila Kiss, Berlin, Germany	W 4
2001		
Feb. 10	Abdellah Benabbou, Berlin	KO 1
Feb. 25	Antonio Postigo, Hamburg, Germany	W 4
April 28	David White, Cardiff, Wales	W 4
June 8	Florian Oanea, Budapest, Hungary	W 6
Oct. 7	Amit Riali, Hamburg	KO 1
Nov. 3	Mickael Ventura, Lubeck, Germany	KO 6
Nov. 24	Rachid Ouali, Vejen, Denmark	KO 2
2002		
Feb. 8	Alessio Furlan, Braunschweig, Germany	W 6
Feb. 23	Francesco Cioffi, Skive, Denmark	KO 2
June 4	Cyril Torrenes, Copenhagen, Denmark	W 6
June 15	Louis Mimoune, Gubbio, Italy	KO 3
Nov. 16	Alban Mothie, Mariehamn, Finland	W 6
2003		
Sept. 25	Wilmer Mejia, Glen Burnie, MD	W 8
Oct. 23	Leo Edwards, Lodi, NJ	KO 1
Dec. 20	Lorant Szabo, Kiel, Germany	W 6
2004		
April 24	Juan Carlos Garcia, Los Angeles	KO 4

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
17	17	0	0	8

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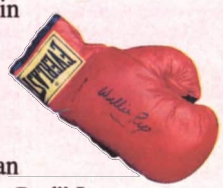
★ Kid Gavilan
★ Ken Buchanan
★ Danny "Little Red" Lopez
★ Angel Manfredy
★ Terry Norris
★ Jeff Fenech
★ Pipino Cuevas
★ Nino Benvenuti
★ "Irish" Micky Ward
★ Paulie Ayala
★ Ricardo "Finito" Lopez
★ Sir Henry Cooper
★ Livingstone Bramble
★ Donald Curry
★ Tommy Morrison
★ Angelo Dundee



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Aug. 1986: Is Sugar Ray Still Sweet? Plus: Lloyd Honeyghan, Tyson-Green, Cooney-Gregg, Hall of Fame (Eder Jofre, Benny Lynch, Bud Taylor, Sam McVey, Nat Langham, John Chambers), Bernardo Pinango.

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Dec. 1986: The Weekend That Shook The Boxing World. Rosario-Bramble & Honeyghan-Curry. Plus: Butch Lewis interview, Buster Drayton, Hector Camacho, Jake LaMotta.

May 1987: Mike Tyson: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, THE RING annual ratings, Louie Espinoza, Herol Graham.

June 1987: Vinny Paz: Phenom Or Phony? Plus: Tyson-Bonecrusher, Mark Breland, Brian Mitchell, Evander Holyfield, Czyz-Edwards, Olajide-Lee, Curry-Montgomery.

July 1987: Spinks-Cooney: The Fight That Refused To Die. Plus: The new RING ratings, Terry Marsh, George Foreman's return, Khaosai Galaxy, Hearns-Andries, Whitaker-Mayweather.

Sept. 1987: Michael Olajide: The Look Of The Future? Plus: Tyson-Thomas, Jeff Fenech, middleweight muddle, Tsuyoshi Hamada, Juan Roldan, Harold Knight.

Nov. 1987: Tyson Wins Heavyweight Triple Crown. Plus: McCallum-Curry, Carlos Monzon interview, triple champions, Orlin & Terry Norris, Ramirez-Alli, Fenech-Richardson, Matthew Hilton.

Dec. 1987: Spinks & Lewis: Boxing's Beastie Boys. Plus: Starling-Breland, Ramzi Hassan, Honeyghan-Hatcher, Holyfield-Ocasio.

Jan. 1988: Darrin Van Horn—Million Dollar Baby? Plus: Evander Holyfield, Hill-Stewart, Juan Coggi, great hookers, AIDS.

Feb. 1988: Gold Outshines Glitter: Tate Tops Olajide. Plus: Tyson-Biggs, Kalambay-Barkley, Hearns-Roldan, fights we'd like to see.

March 1988: Thomas "Hit Man" Hearns: "Now I Own History." Plus: Lockridge & Mayweather, Tony Burton, Julio Cesar Chavez, blood.

April 1988: Evander Holyfield: Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Special year-end awards, Holyfield-Qawi II, Foreman-Sekorski, Hill-Angulo.

May 1988: George Foreman: "I Can Beat Tyson." Plus: Tyson-Holmes, Jesse Benavides, Showtime, no-knockout artists.

Sept. 1988: Sugar Ray: Here He Comes Again! Plus: Andries-Czyz, Kid Chocolate, Don Dunphy, Don Lalonde.

Oct. 1988: Mike Tyson: What Price Glory? Plus: Tyson-Spinks, Hearns-Barkley, Davey Moore.

Nov. 1988: Donny Lalonde: "Sugar Ray is Out Of His Mind!" Plus: Hall of Fame selections (Carlos Ortiz, Joe Brown, Billy Graham, Cus D'Amato, Jimmy Jacobs), Nunn-Tate, Molinares-Starling, Honeyghan-Chung, '88 Olympians.

Jan. 1989: Meldrick Taylor: Philly Phenom. Plus: Marvin Hagler, Alex Wallau, Taylor-McGirt, Olympic results.

Feb. 1989: Julio Cesar Chavez. Plus: Chavez-Ramirez, all-time lightweight ratings, Louie Espinoza, Simon Brown, Roger Mayweather.

March 1989: Hearns Next For Sugar Ray? Plus: Leonard-Lalonde, Prince Charles Williams, Hearns-Kinchen, Nunn-Roldan, Hines-Hilton.

May 1989: The Best Of '88. Plus: Year-end awards, Evander Holyfield, Pryor-Morales, Fenech-Navarro.

Feb. 1990: Mike Tyson: Riddick Bowe & Ray Mercer Take Aim. Plus: Bobby Czyz, Gerry Cooney, Chuck Wepner, Antonio Esparragoza, Roman-Laciar.

March 1990: The '80s—Great Fights, Great Fighters (color). Plus: Jeff Harding, Evander Holyfield, Pete Rademacher, Sharkey-McCoy.

April 1990: Pernell Whitaker: Fighter Of The Year (color). Plus: Tiger Flowers, Duran-Leonard, Chavez-Taylor preview, Jorge Paez, Ali-Cooper.

May 1990: Big George Talks Tough: "Tyson Won't Be That Difficult!" Plus: Ed Hopson, Russian fighters, grudge wars, Archie Moore, Kid Berg, Marcel Cerdan, Chavez-Cortes.

June 1990: Buster! How James Douglas Shocked The World. Plus: Michael Moorer, Camacho-Paez, Tommy Farr, excuses, Dick Tiger, Ruben Olivares-Jeff Chandler.

July 1990: "I'm Hungrier Than Ever Before," By Evander Holyfield. Plus: James Toney, Buddy McGirt, Glenwood Brown, Aaron Davis, Michael Carbajal, Jorge Paez, Kid Gavilan, Mark Breland, Ali-Liston II (color).

Aug. 1990: Chavez: His Greatness Confirmed ... Is He The Best Mexican Fighter Ever? Plus: Matthew Saad Muhammad, John L. Sullivan & Mike Tyson, Michael Nunn, Mark Breland, Harold Johnson, Cus D'Amato, Louis-Godoy (color).

Sept. 1990: Marvin Hagler—Can He Resist The Irresistible Temptation? Plus: Thomas Hearns, Sanchez-Saddler, Paul Banke, puncher vs. chin, Beau Jack, Robinson-LaMotta (color).

Nov. 1990: Tyson vs. Foreman. Can Iron Mike Stop The Blast From The Past? Plus: Bruce Seldon, best chins, Sullivan-Kilrain (color), Azumah Nelson, LaStarza.

Dec. 1990: Exclusive Annual Report: The State Of The Game. Plus: Douglas-Holyfield preview, Julio Cesar Chavez, Joe Grim, Whitaker-Nazario, Rosi-Van Horn, Benny Leonard, Douglas-Tyson (color).

Jan. 1991: Boxing's Baddest Bad Boy: Nigel Benn Plays By His Own Rules. Plus: Roberto Duran, Kid Akeem, Jose Napoles, Jimmy Carruthers, LaMotta-Zale, Dempsey-Willard (color).

Feb. 1991: Boxing On TV—Now You'll Pay! Plus: Ismael Laguna, Tommy Morrison in *Rocky V*, Reggie Tuur, Chiquita Gonzalez, Harold Green, Joe Louis.

April 1991: Julio Cesar Chavez—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Tyson-Stewart, James Leija, Wilfred Benitez, Pedro Decima, Moore-Bassey.

June 1991: Pain, Frustration, Confidence, And Hope: Meldrick Taylor's Life After Chavez. Plus: Foreman-Holyfield preview, Norris-Leonard, David Kamau, Freddie Steele, Bennie Briscoe, Leonard's career (color).

July 1991: Tyson's Title Hopes: He Ain't What He Used To Be ... But It's Not Gonna Matter. Plus: Eusebio Pedroza, Myung Woo Yuh, Willie Meehan, Hearns-Hill preview, computer junior welterweight tournament, Gomez-Fenech, controversial heavyweight finishes (color).

Aug. 1991: Foreman Gives Holyfield A Fight ... And The World A Thrill (color). Plus: Making weight, Harry Greb, Kevin Kelley, Louis-Conn I, Simon Brown-Blocker, Chavez-Duplessis, Sugar Ray Robinson.

Oct. 1991: A Hit Again—How Far Can Thomas Hearns Go? Plus: Battling Levinsky, Oba Carr, Dave McAuley, Muhammad Ali, Lou Ambers, Luther McCarty, ethnic matchups, computer light heavy tournament, Cerdan-Hagler, Rocky Marciano (color).

May 1992: James Toney—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Myung Woo Yuh, Khaosai Galaxy, Rocky Graziano, Billy Soose, Roy Jones, James Warring, Duran-Chavez, Marvin Hagler (color).

July 1992: Does Larry Holmes Deserve A Title Shot? Plus: Nelson-Fenech II, Tracy Patterson, Kelley-Dorsey, fat fighters, Buchanan-Camacho, Holmes-Ali (color).

Aug. 1992: Holyfield-Holmes Prefight. Holmes: "I See Me Takin' Holyfield Outta There." Plus: Iran Barkley, Herbie Hide, George Foreman, Tex Cobb, Carnival of Champions, Harry Greb, Haugen-Mancini, Oscar De La Hoya, Gene Tunney (color).

Sept. 1992: Chavez: Unbeaten At 80-0, But What If He Had To Face These Guys? Plus: Bobby Czyz, Genaro Hernandez, Norris-Taylor, Tommy Gibbons, Sugar Ray Leonard's career, Sugar Ray Robinson (color).

Nov. 1992: Is Riddick Bowe The Next Heavyweight Champion? Plus: Morrison-Hipp, Canizales-Chandler, Chavez-Camacho preview, Australia Best of Nation, Tyson speaks from prison, Corbett-Sullivan (color), Tracy Patterson, Pat Barrett, Knockout Brown.

Feb. 1993: America's Tribute To The Brown Bomber: Joe Louis. Plus: Virgil Hill, Junior Jones, Roger Mayweather, Chicago boxing, Orlando Zulueta, Jose Napoles (color).

April 1993: Riddick Bowe—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: "Grand Slam" fight card, Toney-Barkley preview, Morris East, Joe Louis-John Henry Lewis, All-Time Top 10: Argentina, Fighters of the Year (color).

May 1993: Oscar De La Hoya's Sprint To The Title: Is He Good Enough *Now?* Plus: Carbajal-Gonzalez preview, Lennox Lewis, THE RING Poll, Freddie Pendleton.

Aug. 1994: Bowe's Back! Determined To Do It Again. Plus: Eric Griffin, Pernell Whitaker, Ray Mercer, Roger Donoghue, State of the Game (midterm report), All-Time Top 10: The Philippines.

Dec. 1994: Fighting-Mad! James Toney Just Wants To Beat People Up. Plus: Duran & Robinson, Don King, Mike McCallum, injuries (part II), Tom Molineaux.

Jan. 1995: A Puncher's Dream: Oliver McCall Upsets Boxing's Balance Of Power. Plus: Ruelas brothers, Quincy Taylor, "Unfinished Business," Dave Maier, All-Time Top 10: Canada.

May 1995: The State Of The Game. Plus: Olzubek & Arbachakov, Gonzalez-Kelley, Pazienza-Duran II, All-Time Top 10: France.

Oct. 1995 (92-Page Special): Mismatch? Don't Tell Peter McNeeley! Plus: Fights we'd like to see, Jo-el Scott, Bronco McKart, when stop fights?

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Jan. 1996: King Bruno! A Hero Always ... A Winner At Last. Plus: Julio Cesar Chavez, Oscar De La Hoya, Chris Eubank, Eddie Perkins, who's hot/who's not.

Feb. 1996: Bowe's The Man (For Now), But Is He Man Enough For Tyson? Plus: Lennox Lewis, Hamed-Barrera, Paul Banke, Vince Phillips, boxing on Madison Ave., What If ... Leonard-Pryor.

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June 1997 (Special Collector's Issue): Holyfield-Tyson II: What It Means For Now ... And Forever. Plus: Holyfield-Tyson fight poster, Naseem Hamed, computer unification, Sayers-Heenan, state of the game.

Oct. 1997: Bang! Naseem Hamed Takes Aim At America. Plus: Riddick Bowe, Phillips-Tszyu, Saman Sorjaturong, Bobby Dykes.

Nov. 1997: Is Mike Tyson Finished? Plus: Ike

Ibeabuchi, De La Hoya-Camacho preview, Frankie Conley, Hall of Fame, gloves,

Jan. 1998: Give This Man His Due! If You Can't Respect Oscar ... You Can't Respect Anyone! Plus: Sanchez-Mayweather, Morales-Zaragoza, Lucia Rijker, Marvin Johnson, characters.

Feb. 1998: Welter-Skelter! The Hottest Division In Boxing. Plus: Lewis-Golota, Olympic update, Art Shires, boxing I.Q.

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April 1998: Evander Holyfield: THE RING's Fighter Of The Year (Again!). Plus: Yory Boy Campas, Mullings-Norris, Pinkey Mitchell, Holyfield Q & A, Hamed-Kelley, Oscar De La Hoya.

July 1998: Holyfield ... Tapia ... Hamed ... Jones ... Trinidad ... De La Hoya: Who Will Be The First To Fall? Plus: Magic Johnson, Chavez-Gonzalez & Lopez-Alvarez, underappreciated boxers.

Aug. 1998: Lennox Lewis: No Holyfield, No Glory. Plus: Felix Trinidad, Pat & Mike McMurtry, Chris Byrd, unbreakable records, contenders & pretenders.

Sept. 1998 (92-Page Special): This Man's Not Unbeatable! Five Top Trainers Reveal How To Solve The Hamed Puzzle. Plus: John Tate, Freddie Norwood, Andrew Golota, Roy Jones, 12 greatest finishes.

Oct. 1998: Really Hard Punch ... Really Soft Lips: Oscar Makes Legs Quiver In And Out Of The Ring. Plus: Hector Camacho Jr., Mayweather-Hernandez preview, *Tuesday Night Fights.*

Jan. 1999: Sugar Shane Mosley: The Sweet Tradition Continues. Plus: Evander Holyfield, Julio Cesar Chavez, Erik Morales, Ray "Windmill" White.

Feb. 1999: 1999! It's Gonna Be A Great Year For Boxing. Plus: Mike Tyson, Foreman-Holmes, David Reid, Eric Morel, Richie Mitchell, quitters.

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May 1999: Is It All Over For Tyson? Plus: Terry Norris, Vinny Pazienza, Jesus Pimental, stoppages, mandatories.

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Aug. 1999: Candidates For Greatness: Can Anyone Fill The Heavyweight Void? Plus: Tim Austin, Naseem Hamed, Oscar De La Hoya, Max Schmeling, Holyfield-Lewis.

Sept. 1999: Taking Stock In The Fight Game: Who's Hot, Who's Not. Plus: Tony Ayala, Keith Holmes, Denny & Phil Moyer, scoring.

Dec. 1999: Insiders' Analysis: Can Roy Jones Chop Down The Best Heavyweights? Plus: Ike Ibeabuchi, David Reid, David Tua, Carmen Basilio, Johnny Summerlin.

Holiday 1999 (92-Page Special): Heavyweight Showdowns! Holyfield vs. Lewis II, Grant vs. Golota. Plus: Francois Botha, Arturo Gatti, Michael Carbajal, Rocky Marciano, Lou Filippo.

Jan. 2000: What Does Trinidad's Victory Over Oscar Mean? Plus: Floyd Mayweather, Paul Spadafora, Ralph Dupas, boxing media.

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Jan. 2001 (108-Page Extra): Trinidad's Destiny: Jones Is On His Mind ... But Vargas Is In His Face! Plus: Naseem Hamed, Tszyu-Judah, Evander Holyfield, Willie Bean, 20 greatest middleweights.

Feb. 2001: It's Not Over For Oscar: THE RING's Five-Step Recovery Plan. Plus: Bob Arum, Dingaan Thobela, Hernandez brothers, U.S. Olympic team, future pound-for-pounders.

March 2001 (108-Page Extra): Tyson! Forget About Retirement ... A Title Shot Awaits! Plus: Ayala-Tapia II, Audley Harrison, Chris Byrd, Kirk Johnson, Julio Cesar Chavez, Boone Kirkman, 12 most exciting rounds.

April 2001: A New Beginning ... A New Middle: Felix Trinidad Is Ready To Conquer Another Division! Plus: Shane Mosley, Lennox Lewis, Paul Andrews, boxing business.

May 2001 (108-Page Extra): Felix Trinidad—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, Barrera-Hamed preview, Bernard Hopkins, Joey Archer.

June 2001: Pretty Boy Floyd: Superstar Or Superbrat? Plus: Lewis vs. greats, 2000 Olympians, Henry Hall, rematches we'd like to see.

July 2001 (108-Page Extra): The State Of The Game. Plus: Zab Judah, John Ruiz, Andrew Lewis, Mark Johnson, British boxing.

Aug. 2001: Rocking The World! What Rahman's Victory Means To Boxing. Plus: Barrera-Hamed, Oscar De La Hoya, Mount Whitaker, *Friday Night Fights.*

Sept. 2001 (108-Page Extra): Exclusive RING Interview—Hasim Rahman: "Nobody's Taking My Titles!" Plus: 20 all-time greatest lightweights, Pat Valentino, Hopkins & King, Jones & Arum.

Oct. 2001: Trinidad vs. Hopkins: Middleweight Unification Superfight Analysis & Predictions. Plus: Emanuel Steward, Joe Calzaghe, Ali's opponents, Rahman & King.

Dec. 2001: The Rock Promises Another Shock! "I'm Gonna Knock Lennox Out Again!" Plus: David Reid, Jones-Gonzalez, McCline-Grant, Jackie Graves, ring deaths.

Jan. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Oscar Feeds His Critics: Did He Chicken Out Against Vargas? Plus: Wladimir Klitschko, Chris Byrd, 20 greatest featherweights, "Caveman" Bob Moha.

March 2002 (108-Page Extra): Is Tyson Ready To Regain The Title? Plus: Kostya Tszyu, Floyd Mayweather, Bernard Hopkins, Eddie Futch, fitness, ahead for 2002.

May 2002 (108-Page Extra): Bernard Hopkins—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, Holyfield-Ruiz III, 2000 Olympians, Eric Harding, "Silent" Hairston.

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Aug. 2002: Lewis vs. Tyson: Who Will Win ... And What Happens Next. Plus: Michael Moorer, Jeff Fenech, Charley Parham, Rafael & Juan Manuel Marquez.

Sept. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Vernon Forrest—Next Step In The Master Plan: End Mosley's Career. Plus: Sugar Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran, Ricardo Mayorga, 20 greatest lightweights.

Oct. 2002: Tito' Back ... And He's "Going To Make Hopkins Pay!" Plus: Ward-Gatti, Bouie Fisher, controversial scoring, ruining prospects.

Nov. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Monster Mashed! Can A New Tyson Emerge From The Rubble? Plus: THE RING 100, Evander Holyfield, Don King, Billy Joiner, junior welters.

Jan. 2003 (108-Page Extra): The Golden Boy Proves His Manhood: Is Oscar De La Hoya' Prime Just Beginning? Plus: Michael Grant, David Tua, previews of Morales-Ayala and Ward-Gatti II, overrated/underrated.

Feb. 2003: The Resurrection Of A Warrior: Cam Evander Holyfield Recapture The Glory Of His Youth? Also: Floyd Mayweather Sr., Nate Campbell, Tom & Peter McNeeley, boxing finances, pound-for-pound.

March 2003 (108-Page Extra): Hamed ... Morales ... Tapia: Barrera Has Punched His Ticket To The Hall Of Fame. Also: Joe Mesi, Ricardo Lopez, Pipino Cuevas, alphabet tales, what's ahead for '03.

April 2003: Gatti Has His Ducks In A Row: A New Woman And A New Trainer Put The "Art" Back In Arturo. Also: Barrera-Morales, Roy Jones, Phillip Ndou & Silence Mabuza, Laila Ali, Gorilla Jones,

May 2003 (108-Page Extra): Ali ... Leonard ... Tyson ... Klitschko? Also: Year-end awards, Chris Byrd, Lupe Pintor, Maxie Rosenbloom.

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July 2003 (108-Page Extra): Now What, Roy? How Jones Matches Up Against The Heavyweight Elite. Also: Mike Tyson, Marquez Brothers, Ricardo Williams, Tony Zale.

Aug. 2003: THE RING Unscrambles The Heavyweight Mess. Also: Bernard Hopkins, Scott Harrison, Billy Warren, Latino revolution, cups.

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March 2004 (108-Page Extra): Audley Harrison, Dominick Guinn, Joe Mesi: Who Will Be The Next Star Heavyweight? Also: Floyd Mayweather, Arturo Gatti, Erik Morales, what's ahead for 2004.

April 2004: Antonio Tarver: "It's Not About Roy Jones Anymore." Also: Pacquiao-Barrera, Floyd Mayweather, all punch/no chin, Rinty Monaghan.

May 2004 (108-Page Extra): James Toney—Fighter Of The Year. Also: Year-end awards, Mosley-Wright preview, King's "Night Of The Undisputed," boxing politicians.

June 2004: The Lewis Retirment: Will He Come Back? Also: Scott Pemberton, Jones-Tarver preview, James McGirt, James J. Braddock.

July 2004 (100-Page Extra): The State Of The Game. Also: Erik Morales, Howard Eastman, Marco Antonio Barrera, Hank Hankinson, middleweights.

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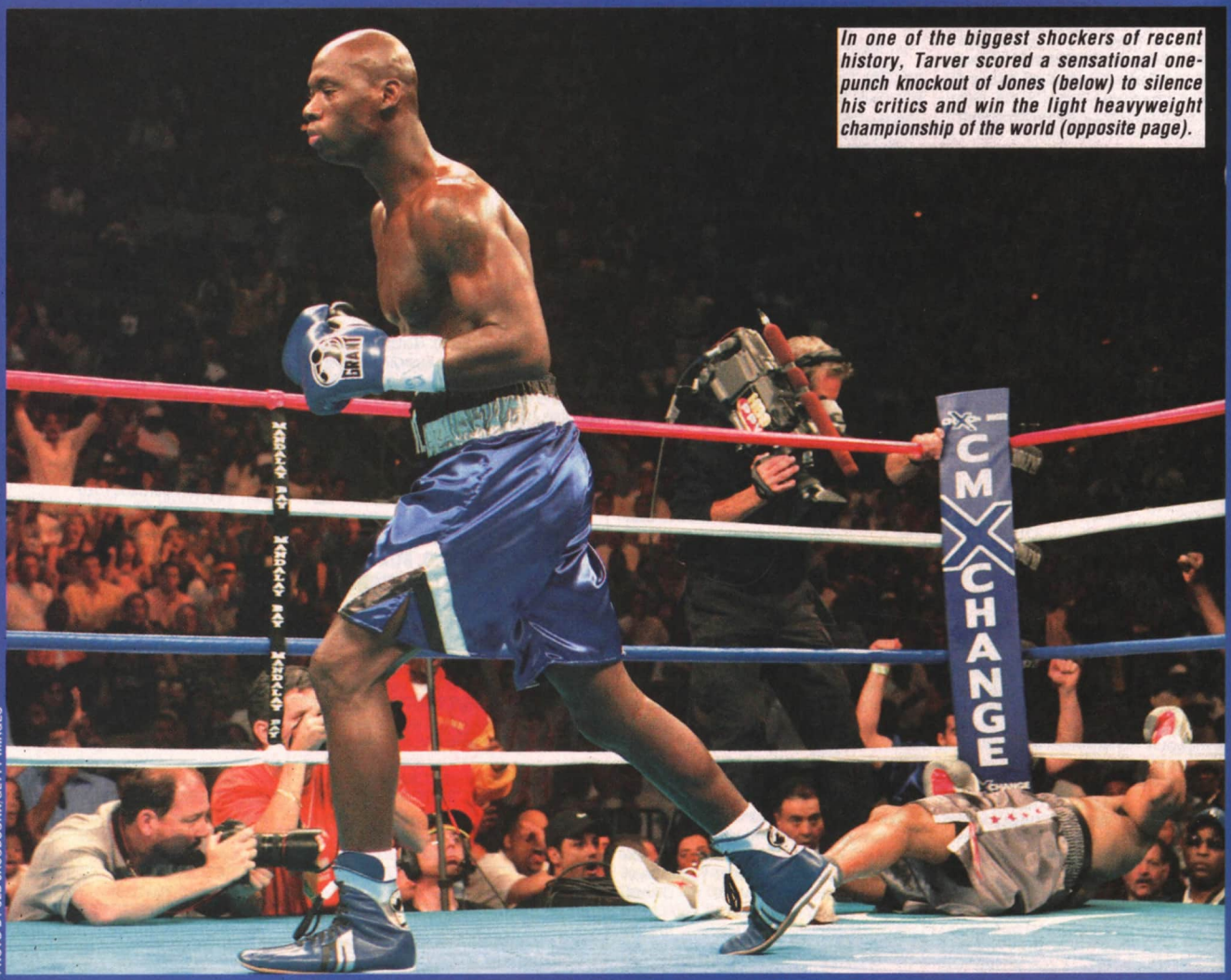
THE MAGIC MAN MAKES JONES DISAPPEAR

How Antonio Tarver Pulled Off The Impossible!



In one of the biggest shockers of recent history, Tarver scored a sensational one-punch knockout of Jones (below) to silence his critics and win the light heavyweight championship of the world (opposite page).

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

By Johnnie Whitehead

Maybe Antonio Tarver should run for President in 2004, because when he gives his version of the "Mission Accomplished" speech, he actually accomplished his mission.

No, it wasn't a life-or-death struggle in some Middle Eastern desert, but on a boxing level, it was nothing short of an execution in the desert town of Las Vegas. Tarver, a foot soldier since his professional career began in 1997, not only became commander-in-chief of the light heavyweight division May 15 at Mandalay Bay Events Center, he ended the occupation of longtime dictator Roy Jones in less than two rounds.

"I didn't want to leave it in the hands of the judges. I went in there to knock

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

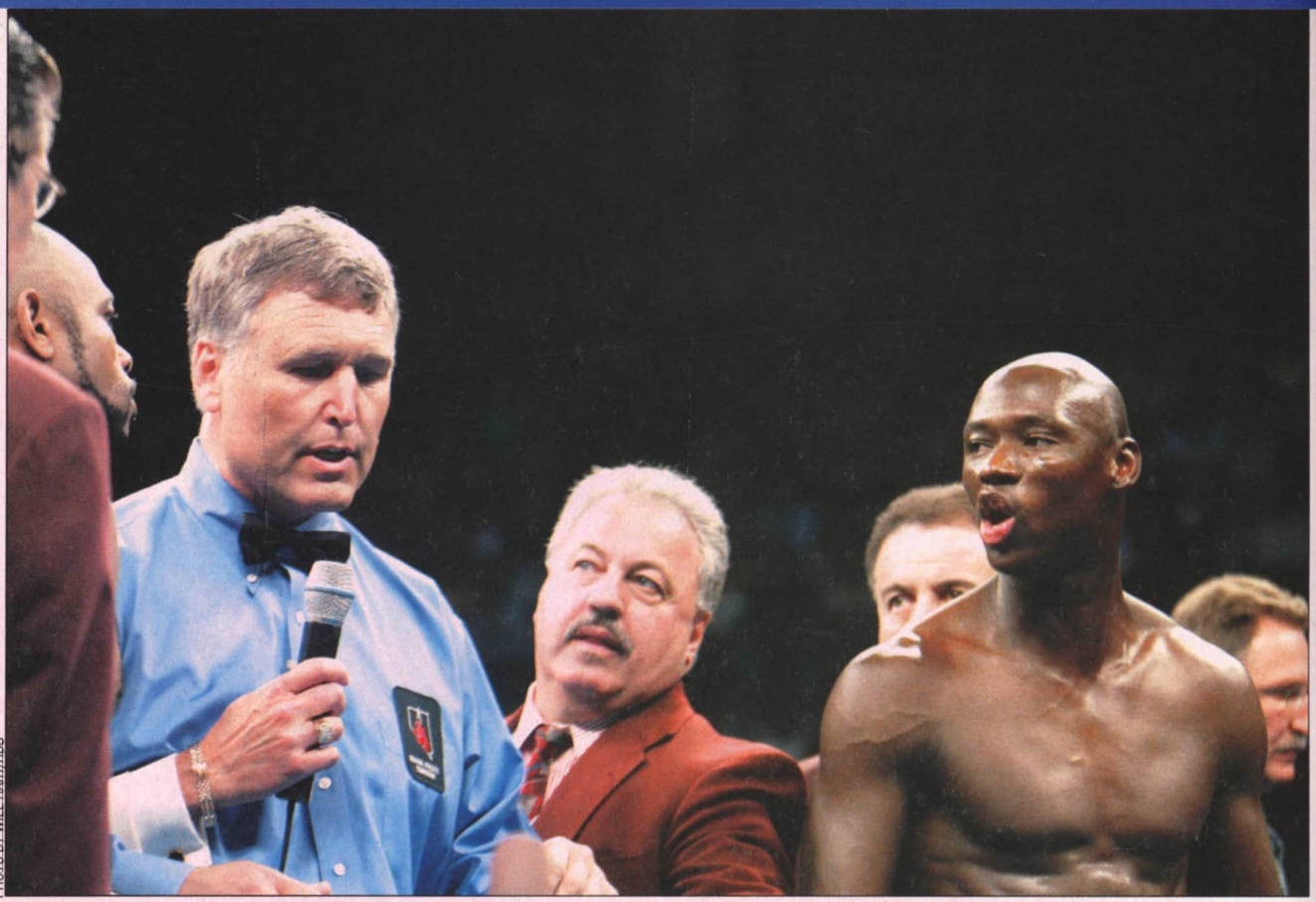


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Gamesmanship: "You got any excuses tonight, Roy?" asked Tarver, getting in a potent psychological blow before the fight even started.

him out," said Tarver after beating Jones to capture THE RING light heavyweight championship belt. "Now there's no question. It's time the boxing world gives me my justice. I did it the hard way. I did it my way. If I had it all to do over again, I wouldn't change a thing."

Jones would, of course. He'd have started by thanking his lucky alter ego that he made it through the minefield in one piece the first time he fought Tarver. After that, he'd have persuaded "R.J."—his supposed Mr. Bad Ass persona who appears to be as real as those weapons of mass destruction in Iraq—not to go back for another dose of Tarver.

When you think about it, a rematch made no sense for Jones in terms of money or history. But Tarver can talk as good a game as he can fight, and he lured the champion back into the ring by questioning his manhood and gnawing at his ego at every opportunity. Although Jones won a debatable decision the first time, he lost some luster because for once he didn't capture the event. He attributed his pedestrian performance not to anything Tarver did, but to being weight drained from scaling down to 175 pounds too quickly after blowing up to 193 for the John Ruiz fight. By the time they faced each other again on May 15, Tarver was sick of hearing it.

"You got any excuses tonight, Roy?" barked Tarver when referee Jay Nady asked the fighters if they had any questions right before the first bell sounded. But as soon as the water turned to wine—via a perfectly timed overhand left—Jones had an explanation for the improbable, clean one-punch knockout loss.

"Now he's making an excuse that he wasn't really interested in the fight," said Charles Muniz, Tarver's adviser. "Let's let him pick his weight, and if he wants to do it again, let's, unless Antonio is bored at the thought of fighting *him* again."

Moreover, much of the media, like fallen fighters grasping for answers, parroted the usual platitudes to rationalize their miscalculations in canonizing Jones. It was called a "lucky punch," the classic cop-out used by fighters who generally have chins that crack when they smile. Others claimed Jones wasn't prepared again, or that he was overrated all along, which is nothing short of ignorant considering he was number one on every legitimate pound-for-pound list going in.

Certainly, Jones hasn't always sought out the best challenges and is considered by some to be the favorite son of HBO, but he has been on top for 10 years since beating James Toney in 1994. To discredit Jones as a fighter is to discredit the magnitude of what Tarver did.

There's a saying in boxing that the more experienced fighter takes the understudy into the deep water and drowns him, using his calmness to bait him and his courage under fire to hook him before tugging him below. Tarver, 22-2 (18), flipped that script on its ear and employed a more emphatic method. What he did was the equivalent of dragging Jones, 49-2 (38), to a shallow basin and bashing his head in on the rocks. It was like the Siegfried and Roy spectacle on The Strip all over again, but "The Magic Man" from Orlando, Florida, was playing the role of tiger, and Roy was, well, Roy.

"In the first fight, he wasn't really available for counters. Roy fought me so carefully he didn't lay his ass on the line," said Tarver. "For this fight, he had the weight of the

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Although Jones has beaten many southpaws in the past, he's generally made the mistake of moving to his right, directly into the path of his opponent's power. Against the savvy, hard-hitting Tarver, the technical error proved disastrous.

world on his shoulders. He had his legacy. He wanted to prove something to his fans."

No fighter is perfect, not even Jones, despite the Superman hyperbole. Putting his hands behind his back and then knocking out Glen Kelly with a right may have been a *SportsCenter* moment deemed as unbelievable as a cow jumping over the moon, but it was more of an indictment of the quality of that opponent than Jones' skill level.

When Jones, 35, is in his comfort zone, which means he's countering and hot-dogging against a balls-to-the-wall aggressor such as Richard Hall or Vinny Paz, his punches rain down like fireworks on the Fourth of July. When challenged cerebrally, such as he was against Eric Harding, Montell Griffin, and Tarver, Jones debilitates into a dud.

That's why Griffin, with legendary trainer Eddie Futch in his corner, gave Jones so many problems the first time, a ninth-round disqualification loss for Jones in March 1997. In the rematch, realizing that even if he did get caught it was irrelevant because Griffin couldn't punch, Jones took the initiative and humiliated the only man to hold a victory over him prior to Tarver via one-round knockout.

So naturally, coming into his rematch with Tarver, Jones was expected to walk over Tarver in a similar fashion. The problem was that Tarver is seven inches taller than the 5'7" Griffin, and unlike Griffin, he could hurt Jones. Also, due to the fact that Tarver is a southpaw, freestyling fighters like Jones, who prefer to fight at a rhythm with their left hand waist-high, can't get off because the right jab is always on top of their lead hand (see Shane Mosley's one-sided loss to Winky Wright for additional evidence).

"I'm a powerful puncher," said Tarver. "I told everybody if Roy comes out fast, he'll be the one looking like Montell Griffin."

The technical mistakes Jones makes are voluminous, and always have been. But popular opinion, as well as his opponents, was so blinded by his hand speed that they couldn't see them.

"Roy Jones is like the fastest gun in the West," said Tarver's trainer, Buddy McGirt, who had been studying Jones for years. "When he starts shooting, everybody runs for cover. When someone starts shooting back, Roy doesn't fire back too good. Don't wait for him to get done punching to punch back. Just let your hands go. Roy very rarely throws a straight punch, because he's trying to get out of the way at the same time."

Which is exactly what happened when Jones was separated from his senses in the second round of the rematch. After leading with a right hand that missed, Jones, who had his lead left foot outside of Tarver's lead right foot when he began throwing,

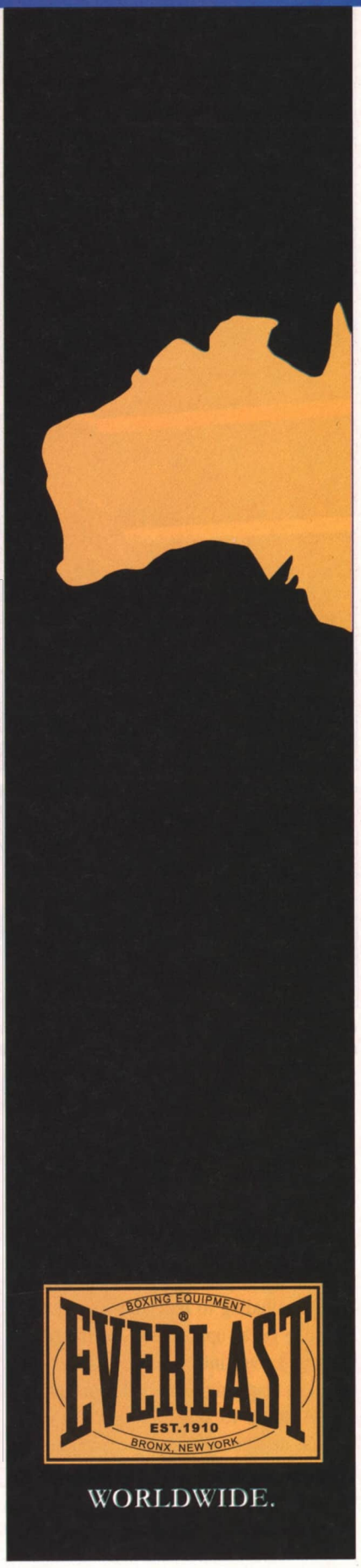


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Over and out: Tarver watches Jones crash land in the second round of their much-anticipated rematch. It was only the second time in his 51-bout pro career Jones had been decked, the first time he'd been badly hurt, and his first knockout defeat.

pulled straight back, relinquishing his balance to hold position. Tarver stayed in the pocket, took a step to his right as Jones retreated, and fired an overhand left hand that landed so hard and flush that Tarver would later say he felt it down to his boots.

"Sometimes Roy misses punches on purpose to set you up for a counter," said McGirt, alluding to how Jones short arms his jab to get an opponent to commit before turning it over into a hook that has produced so many highlight-reel knockouts. "I told Antonio to stay low when you jab because he's going to counter your jab with a left hook. Stay low and it goes over your head every time."

Still, it took more than power and composure from Tarver. It took Jones-like reaction time to successfully shoot the gap before the window closed on the opening. Jones always had moved the wrong direction against southpaws—to his right and into their power—and has gotten away with it. The only time he was ever knocked down before the Tarver rematch was in a 1998 win against then-WBA light heavyweight beltholder Lou Del Valle, who nailed him with a straight left, causing his legs to give out on a slippery canvas.

Jones moved the wrong way for most of the Tarver rematch, too. Call it fistic justice, or maybe it's a case of lack of boxing basics finally coming to roost after almost a decade of Jones' crowing.

"I knew at the end of the first round we had him," said McGirt.

That opening stanza was fool's gold for Jones, who controlled ring center and backed up Tarver. That way, Jones thought, he was assured of keeping his back off the ropes, which is where Tarver inflicted almost all of his damage in their first encounter. Though Jones took the first round easily and still was able to land right-hand whips to Tarver's body, he couldn't maintain that posture simply because that's not who he is.

Tarver exposed his intentions, which should have signaled to Jones he was treading on dangerous ground. He was setting up Jones in similar fashion to how George Foreman trapped Michael Moorer to win the heavyweight title at age 45, when he adjusted the angle of a one-two combination to knock out the heavy favorite in the 10th round.

Except Tarver was able to adjust his aim much quicker. He was walking down Jones, cutting off the ring, feinting, and smothering the left hand with a range-measuring jab.

The Foreman moment came when Tarver narrowly missed Jones' chin with a straight left hand. Roughly 20 seconds later, Tarver drew Jones into an exchange, and when the moment of truth came, he stepped inside and delivered a knockout blow with more than just his body weight behind it. The punch that sent Jones down also carried the weight of all the baggage Tarver had been burdened with since his career began inconspicuously eight years ago, when he was written off as a loudmouth who didn't put on crowd-pleasing performances, an amateur hasbeen who wasn't worth more than a bag of aluminum cans.

The looped left landed on the button and sent Jones down on his back. He skidded partway under the bottom rope, his head and shoulders coming to rest on the apron. He rolled over and made it to his hands and knees midway into the count, and then fell forward again. Jones finally staggered up as Nady reached 10 and stopped the contest at the 1:41 mark of the second.

Now, Tarver has graduated to an elite class of fighters, alongside Bernard Hopkins, Winky Wright, and Vernon Forrest, who've defied the tide. Though no TV executive or promoter would ever admit it, there's an unwritten rule in boxing that says that if you're a gifted, technically sound, not-always-thrilling boxer who happens to be black, there's more demand for you washing windshields in Anytown, U.S.A., than topping a major boxing card.

"The less spectacular top fighters are always shut out of the big fights because there's no demand to see them," said FOX Sports Net's Max Kellerman.

But that might be changing. Tarver-Jones II drew 360,000 buys for HBO Pay-Per-View (at $49.95), an increase of approximately 60,000 from their first fight. There were also 10,318 fans on hand at Mandalay Bay to see it live.

Even so, almost anything the 35-year-old Tarver does from this point forward probably will pale in comparison, unless he moves up to the lackluster heavyweight division, which is loaded with prospects, veterans, and retreads. Tarver says he can carry 215 pounds comfortably, and naturally Mike Tyson was the first name on his hit list.

"They need me," said Tarver. "Nothing's up there but a bunch of no-name champions and some guy who can't even speak English. I'm fixing to hit the weight room right now. Heavyweights, here I come."

When he's all done there, Tarver might consider going after Jones again. He wants Jones' analyst job with HBO. "I want it all," he said. "I'm promotable and marketable, so what am I lacking now? I don't understand what all the surprise is about. My talent and ability has always been here. It's not like I just arrived overnight. But sometimes you have to earn it. That's when it's sweet."

Mission accomplished. ■

Johnnie Whitehead is an editor at USA Today and a regular contributor to this magazine.

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Here's a sight many fans thought they'd never see: Roy Jones being counted out. Jones showed courage struggling back to his feet just inside the 10-count, but was still groggy looking when referee Jay Nady called a halt.

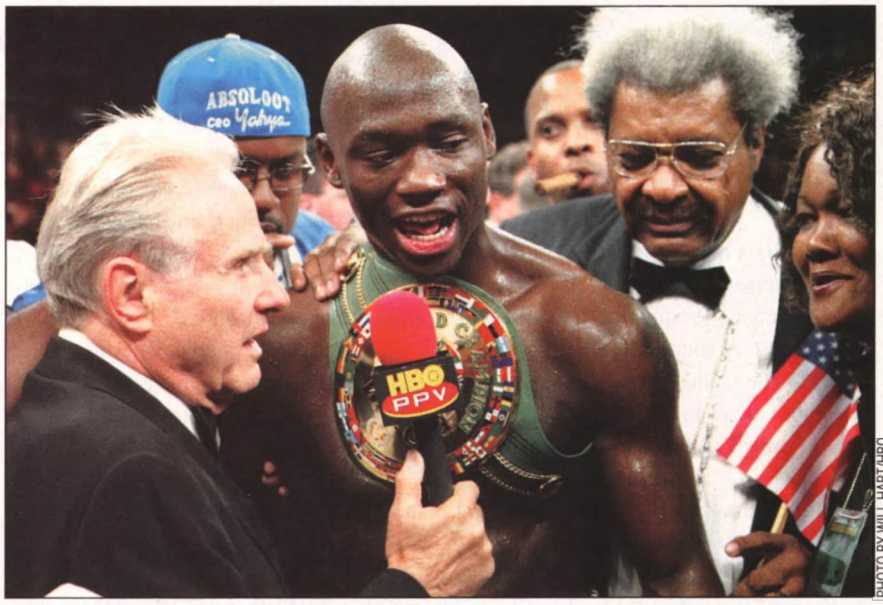


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

HBO's Larry Merchant interviews Tarver following his kayo of Jones. What's next for the new light heavyweight champ remains to be seen, but neither the fighter nor his promoter, Don King, are ruling out a step up to the heavyweight division.

PACQUIAO-MARQUEZ:

A RIVALRY IS BORN

How Many Fights Will It Take To Settle It?

By Ivan Goldman

Unless one of them gets struck by a comet, Juan Manuel Marquez and Manny Pacquiao will do it again.

After they fought to a controversial draw in one of the most exciting featherweight matches in years before an enthusiastic crowd of more than 7,000 in the MGM Grand arena, everything points toward a rematch. Their promoters want it, the fans need it, and their legacies demand it. HBO executives would have to be crazy not to lust for it.

But that still leaves plenty of questions. For starters, was their first go-around truly a draw? Or was one of them robbed? If so, which one? Beyond that, what's going to happen next time? Who will win? And will their next clash generate the same fireworks?

For Bob Arum, the last question is the easiest to answer. "These guys don't know how *not* to do great fights," said Marquez' promoter.

Looking at the Pacquiao-Marquez matchup, thoughts naturally turn to Marco Antonio Barrera and Erik Morales, who fought as junior feathers and then as featherweights in their second outing. After their great battle in February 2000, it was generally expected that a rematch would be a continuation, not a sequel, providing us, in effect, a 24-round, nonstop slugfest in two parts. But the second contest, though excellent, provided less action.

Insofar as the scoring went, many think Barrera got screwed the first time, Morales the second, and so the karmic math came out even. Which leads us to the first question about the Marquez-Pacquiao bout. Was that split draw a fair outcome?

Some believed the scores of 115-110, 110-115, and 113-113 showed just how close and hard to score the fight was. Others said the 10-point difference

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

PHOTO BY JOHN GURZINSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Although the right hand was not his primary weapon against Marquez, this particular one from Pacquiao did a fine job of rearranging the Mexican's features. Crunching action like this left many fans calling for a featherweight championship rematch.

between Guy Jutras of Montreal and John Stewart of New Jersey demonstrates we need judges with better skills who follow a more unified scoring criterion. Jutras saw it for Marquez, Stewart for Pacquiao.

Judge Burt Clements of Nevada, who scored it 113-113, admitted later that when he scored the first round 10-7 for Pacquiao, he "screwed up." He decided in retrospect that because Marquez went down three times, he should have scored it 10-6, which is how the other two judges and most knowledgeable observers had it.

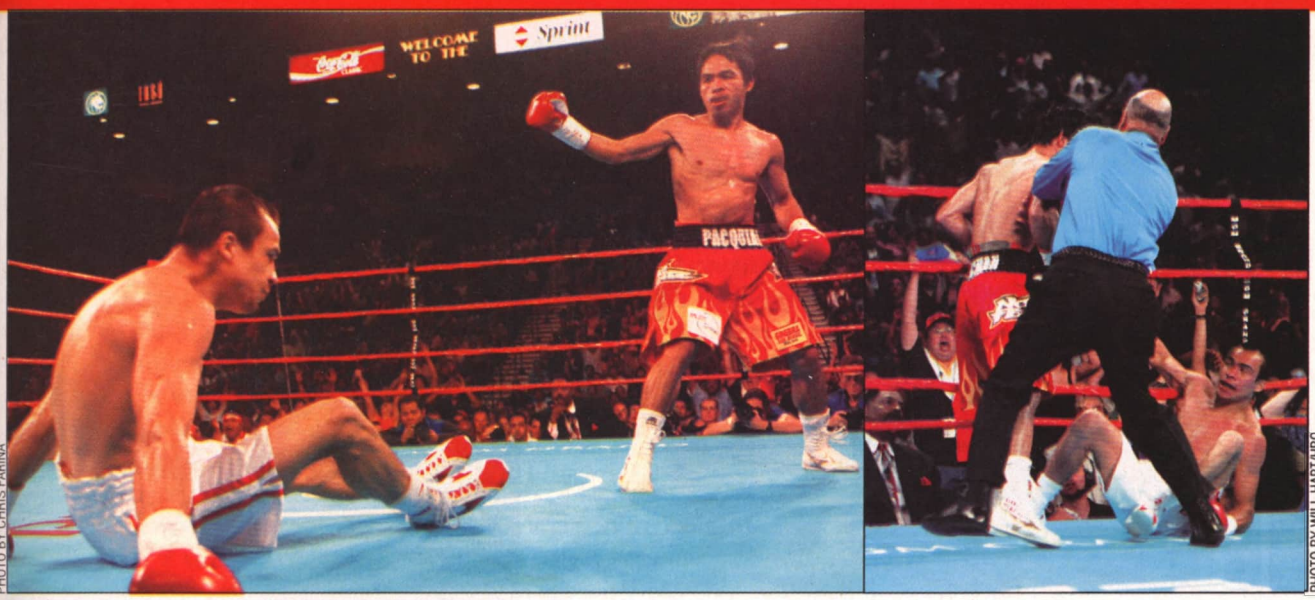
Marc Ratner, the Nevada commission's executive director, agreed the round should have been 10-6, but wouldn't overrule the original decision. This was Las Vegas, after all. Millions were wagered on the fight, and gamblers want their money *now*, not after a hearing. With sports books already making their payouts—and doing quite well for themselves thanks to the draw result—they could hardly be expected to pay the same tickets differently if the ruling were reversed.

Had Clements done what he now says he should have done, his score would be 113-112, giving Pacquiao a split decision. The clamor for a rematch would be far less intense. And Pacquiao, now 38-2-2 (29), would have gone on to fight Erik Morales as planned.

THE RING scored round one 10-6 and had a final score from ringside of 114-111 for Pacquiao. But on the other hand, respected Las Vegas boxing columnist Royce Feour scored it 114-111 Marquez, illustrating the

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Marquez was no slouch, either, in the face-distorting powerpunch department. Although Pacquiao was the faster fighter and the heavier puncher, Marquez was the more accurate and skillful of the two boxers.



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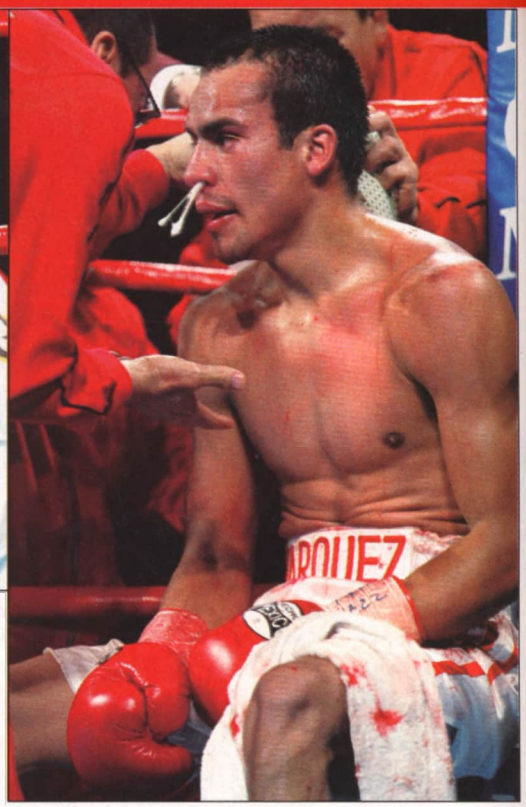
The first round was a disaster for Marquez, as he was knocked down three times—and the third time (above right), he almost didn't get up. The scoring of that one-sided opening round became a major point of controversy after the draw verdict was revealed.

sort of difference of opinions that existed in the media following this fight.

But Feour also contended that referee Joe "Fair But Firm" Cortez was wrong to let the fight continue after the first round because Marquez was clearly on Queer Street. When the round ended, you'd have had a tough time finding someone to bet the contest would last more than another round or two. Marquez admitted he was still clearing his head when the bell sounded to begin round two.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

After surviving the early scare, Marquez fought back with exceptional bravery, even as blood spewed from his nose. His Mexican fan base should increase exponentially given the heart he showed in rallying back against Pac-Man.



PHOTOS BY WILL HART/HBO

While old master Nacho Beristain did his best to lead Marquez to an unlikely come-from-behind victory (and to stop the bleeding from his nose, right), younger master Freddie Roach (above) helped Pacquiao remain focused when Marquez seemed to be taking over the fight.

On the other hand, after the third knockdown, the excited Pac-Man clearly hit Marquez when he was on the canvas, so Cortez could also have deducted a point or even disqualified him. This piles controversy on top of controversy. But that's boxing, folks.

If you gave Pacquiao full credit for his three knockdowns in round one, scoring it 10-6, then Marquez, now 42-2-1 (33), had to win at least eight of the other 11 rounds to win the fight. That's an awful lot of rounds in a bout that had so many close ones.

Although Pacquiao was marked up afterward, Marquez looked like he'd been clobbered repeatedly with a solid piece of lumber. Something or somebody was getting to him in that ring. The best evidence that Marquez lost came from the lips of his promoter.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

As with all entertaining fights that end inconclusively, a rematch is the most logical next step for both fighters. It's unclear whether the edge lies with Marquez, who seemed to figure Pacquiao out as the fight went on, or with the Filipino champion, who was dealing with hand and leg injuries.

"It was a very close fight, as shown by the divergence in scoring," Arum said. "I don't think there should be controversy about the scoring."

Arum has an inescapable history of claiming incompetence and/or skullduggery when he thought the judges gave his fighters the shaft. But after this fight, his heart immediately throbbed with kindness and conciliation—traits that fit him about as well as a shirt with a 14-inch collar. "The way these guys fought," he said, "there was a poetic justice in calling this a draw."

Pacquiao's promoter Muhammad, though not jumping up and down in disgust, said the Filipino hero deserved the victory. He pointed out that if Clements "would have scored the [first] round properly,

Manny would have won a split decision. But Manny doesn't understand that when you get a draw in the other guy's backyard, that's a victory."

Be that as it may, the talk now has to turn to how a second battle shapes up.

"In a rematch I think Marquez has a good chance to come back and beat this guy, even though I had to give this first fight to the Filipino," said longtime California matchmaker Jerry Bilderrain, one of boxing's wiser old heads. "Marquez is a little bit smarter in there. But Manny is so goddamn strong and determined; he's dangerous. He was in there all the time. He's a hard nut to crack. But in a second fight I'd still have to go with Marquez from a technical standpoint.

"Marquez will give him nothing but angles, moving side to side and jabbing, jabbing, jabbing. But that won't clinch it. This Pacquiao is a tough guy to fight. He may come out next time and stop Marquez."

Southpaw Pacquiao is clearly the harder puncher and lightning quick—quicker than Marquez. Marquez knew that going in. But it's one thing to see a man punch on a fight tape and another to have his glove slip through your defense, smash you in the head, and knock you down. After that first disastrous round, Marquez absorbed his lesson and used it to make a comeback so brave and intelligent it defies logic.

He had plenty to lose. Now 30, he's been complaining with some justification for years that he couldn't get any big fights because everybody ducked him. When he finally got a title shot against Freddie Norwood in 1999, he lacked sufficient aggression and lost a boring fight by decision.

Had he stayed down after that third knockdown, Marquez, who never earned much of a following among famously fickle Mexican fans, might well have been relegated to the role of a pretender—a fighter who talks a good game but couldn't even get out of the first round against the champion who beat up and stopped their beloved Barrera.

Partially because his fans are sparse, Marquez had to settle for a $500,000 purse while Pacquiao got $650,000. So Juan Manuel, a 3-2 underdog in the sports books, showed his countrymen he has the kind of heart they demand from their fighters.

As the fight wore on, Marquez, who held two alphabet titles but was viewed by informed observers as the challenger to THE RING world champion Pacquiao, proved what was already suspected: He uses angles better and counterpunches with more skill than his freakishly powerful opponent. And he has Nacho Beristain in his corner. If Beristain spoke English, he'd get the credit he deserves as one of the finest trainers in the business.

But Pac-Man, conqueror of previous *real* world champion Barrera, was trained by the younger but equally knowledgeable and accomplished Freddie Roach. Under Roach's guidance, Pacquiao, 25, raised his work ethic and became a more complete fighter. He trained in Roach's Hollywood gym every day and returned to his quarters nearby, away from the distractions in the Philippines, where he is as popular and revered as Joe Louis and Babe Ruth used to be in the U.S.

"He's the second coming of Flash Elorde, a former super featherweight champion who was the most famous Filipino fighter of all-time and was the darling of Filipinos," Bilderrain observed. "On the basis of his aggressiveness and his way of handling himself in the ring, Manny beats Elorde all around."

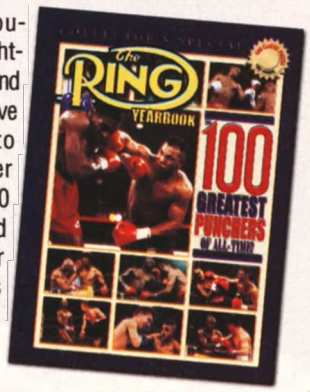
Also in Pacquiao's favor is the fact that he may be healthier next time out. He severely injured his left hand in the first round, and one of his legs, injured in training, was so cramped up he couldn't move the way he wanted. Normally, when fighters give excuses, they're just, well, excuses. But when solid rocks like Pacquiao or Marquez complain about an ailment, you can bet it's real.

The two fighters, each claiming victory, embraced at the postfight press conference. They understood that any grievance they might have with the officials was no fault of the other warrior.

Like Micky Ward and Arturo Gatti, like Barrera and Morales, like Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier, each brought out everything that's great in the other. A rematch will likely do that again. ■

Ivan Goldman is THE RING's West Coast correspondent.

BOXING'S GREATEST PUNCHERS



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TALENT ALONE IS NEVER ENOUGH

Can A Managerial Makeover Finally Turn Mayweather Into A Superstar?

By Joe Santoliquito

Maybe someday Floyd Mayweather will finally get it. "Pretty Boy" may eventually realize it's not talent alone that attracts huge pay-per-view numbers and sellout crowds. Maybe someday, a box office stampede will occur when Mayweather's face appears on a fight poster, and when doors fling open droves upon droves of fans will come streaming in to watch one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world.

But that day has yet to arrive.

In the meantime, that kind of attention was more focused on a different champion in mid-May. While Mayweather was getting ready to make his 140-pound debut, another young colt about 80 miles west of where Mayweather was about to take on DeMarcus Corley was drawing nearly 9,000 fans—at 8:30 a.m. the same day to see a 15-minute workout!

Smarty Jones, the wonder horse whose warm-and-fuzzy story has captured the imagination of sports fans throughout the country, brought in multitudes just to watch him trot around. Mayweather needed the extra nudge from HBO's rebroadcast of Antonio Tarver's epic knockout of Roy Jones the previous week to entice viewers to watch the telecast of his fight against Corley at Atlantic City's Boardwalk Hall.

Mayweather doesn't do warm-and-fuzzy, though he wants the same mesmerizing, enthralling hold on the public that Smarty Jones has. The fear, however, is that Pretty Boy may turn more into Roy Jones Junior Jr.—a great talent with little crossover appeal—than Smarty Jones. At 27, Mayweather is one of the best fighters in the world, yet he's never headlined a pay-per-view.

Floyd Mayweather (above) moved up in the pound-for-pound rankings, but "Pretty Boy" has to find something more than just talent to move up in the consciousness of boxing fans. Mayweather's crowd-pleasing 12-round victory over DeMarcus "Chop Chop" Corley (opposite page) in his 140-pound debut was a good start toward achieving that goal.

PHOTOS BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

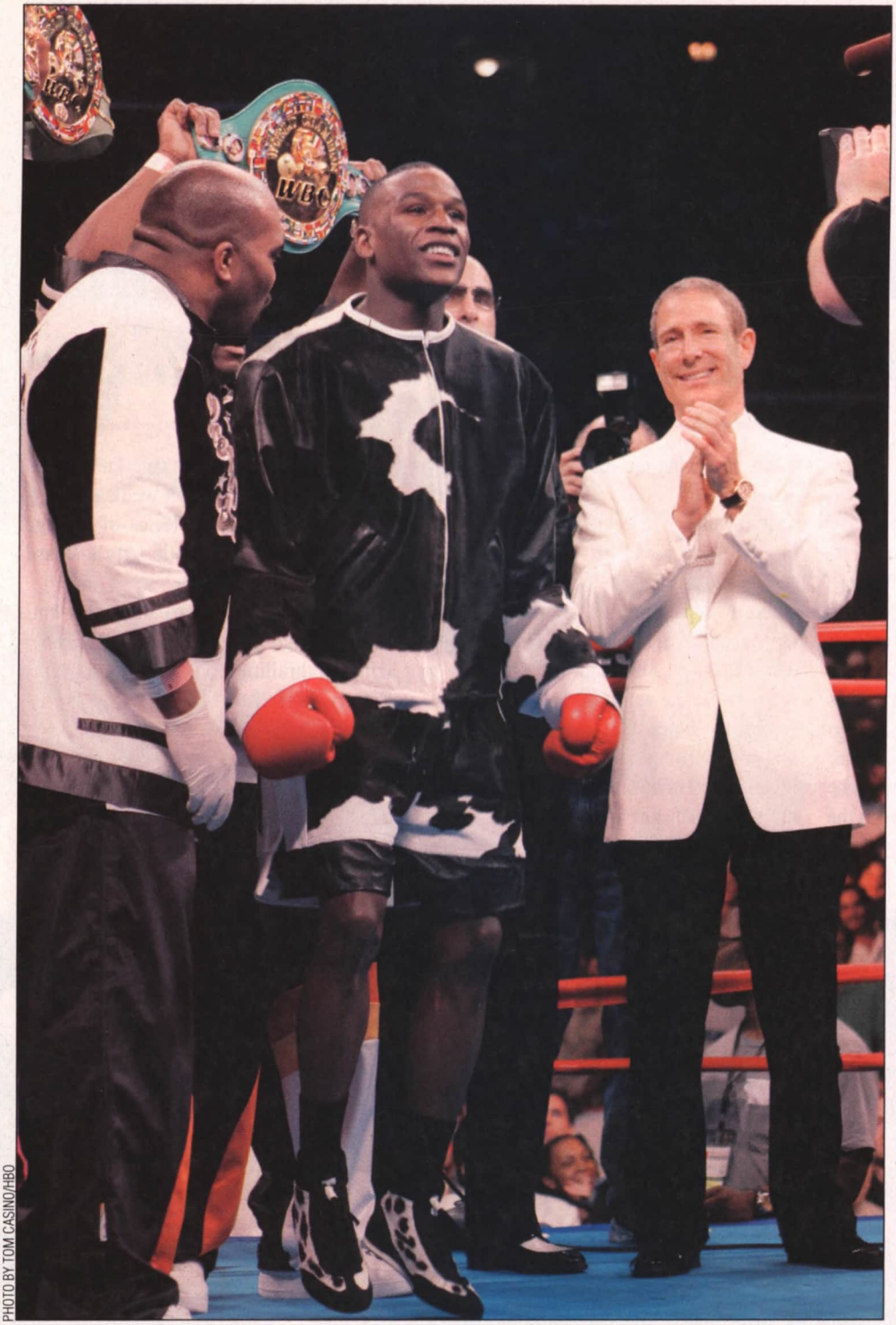


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Lew Hendler, pictured next to Mayweather clapping his hands, is the co-owner of NRaGE, the managerial company now handling Mayweather. Hendler believes he can change Mayweather's tarnished image.

Against Corley, Mayweather did his part in the ring. He tallied a surprisingly entertaining, 12-round unanimous decision over the courageous southpaw Corley before a live audience of just 6,103. But we've seen that before from the gifted Mayweather.

What we haven't seen during his eight-year pro career is Mayweather's evolution as a marquee fighter. The former world lightweight champion may have twice the amount of talent of junior welterweight contender Arturo Gatti, but has nowhere near Gatti's fan appeal and drawing power.

Pretty Boy is trying. He's hired NRaGE Sports Management, based in Hatboro, Pennsylvania, as his new management team, distancing himself from his previous manager, James Prince, who took the brunt of the blame for the split between Mayweather and his father, Floyd Sr.

And no time may be better than the present for Pretty Boy to take over boxing. Tarver's left hand shattered the invincible veneer of Jones. Bernard Hopkins, the reigning pound-for-pound king, is going to be 40 in January, and has to start showing his age eventually. Oscar De La Hoya is nearing the end of his career. Shane Mosley is 1-3, with 1 no-contest in his last five fights, and James Toney and Kostya Tszyu are two grizzled veterans who have recently been plagued by injuries.

But Mayweather is smack in the confluence of opposing streams. Also hanging over him is a pending legal matter involving a misdemeanor domestic charge for allegedly striking Josie Harris, the mother of three of his four children. Mayweather faced a number of misdemeanor charges in recent years, but the pending charge could be his gravest because of previous convictions in two similar incidents.

Mayweather pleaded guilty to two domestic violence counts in March '02, both involving Melissa Brim, the mother of his oldest child. Mayweather also pleaded guilty to battery of Brim's father.

Is it too late to salvage Mayweather's image? Lew Hendler, co-owner of NRaGE with Neal Menaged, doesn't think so.

"In general, we're looking to follow a George Foreman model," said Hendler, in regards to marketing his new client. "I don't know if I want to change Floyd, but I want to encourage him into addressing areas where his image could be viewed positively. The legal issues we'd like Floyd to put behind him. As far as the press, we intend for him to be more accessible. We're looking to involve him in events, whether they are for a charity or as a spokesman for a product.

"Over time, we'd have his recognition level and fan base go beyond boxing

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Mayweather engaged Corley and was willing to stand in front of the larger fighter. Though Pretty Boy made it a one-sided fight, his fan-friendly style had the crowd stirring at times.

purists. That enhances his value in the ring and makes him a pay-per-view value. We believe that his genuine relationship with the media will make him more valuable to himself. But we're dealing with a 27-year-old kid, and there is a certain way you are at that age. The thing is, Floyd is very, very much his own man. I've found that Floyd has a clear idea of what he wants, and it may be a challenge for him to get what he wants. Talent-wise, Floyd may be the best fighter in the world. That's what we're trying to sell."

Larry Merchant, HBO's ringside analyst, thinks time will determine whether or not fans will forget some of Mayweather's surly antics, like the very public rift with his father and the infamous "slave contract" comment directed toward HBO.

"Floyd is in a peculiar place," Merchant said. "One, he does have those legal problems hanging over his head. If it goes wrong, everything else is academic. We've seen recently a similar situation, where Diego Corrales was sidelined for a year. Mayweather has to clear that hurdle first.

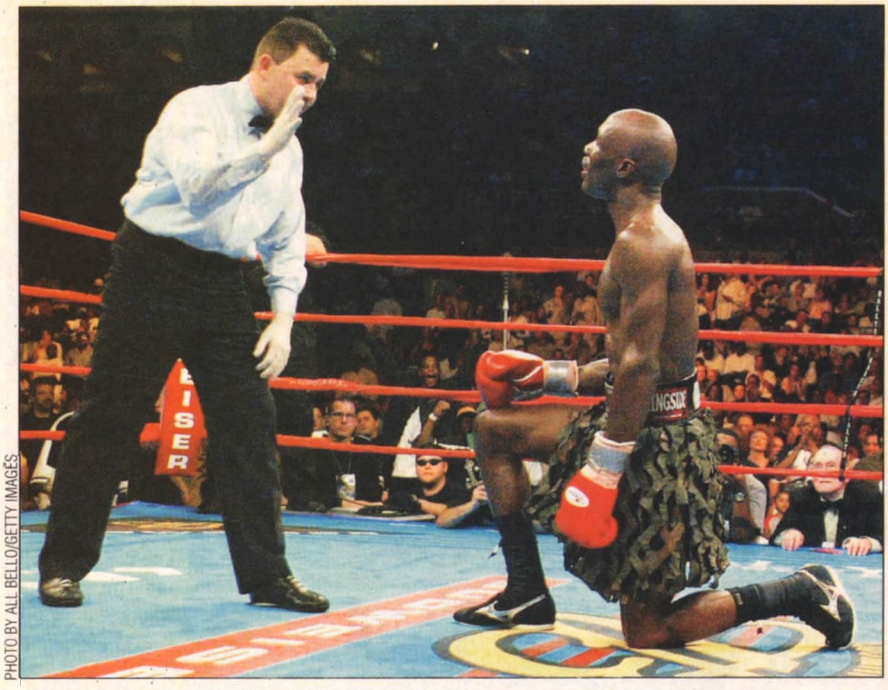
"The image problem is a harder thing to make disappear. Maybe five years down the road, if he doesn't get into any more public hassles, like the one with his father and HBO, or do things that bring negative attention to him, that will change. But once there is an opinion about a public figure, that's hard to turn around. The public connects with fighters when they are young. Look back at Leonard, Duran, Hearns, and Hagler; they were all stars when they were young fighters. Hagler took some time, because those other guys were there.

"Secondly, Mayweather's expectations of his value in the market place are inflated. The same could be said for Shane Mosley, Winky Wright, and Bernard Hopkins. Oscar De La Hoya set the bar so high. It's hard for other fighters to compute that. It's too personal for them to see that it's something about them that the public doesn't love. In boxing, the idea isn't just to win fights but win fans. But for whatever reason, Mayweather hasn't been able to do that."

Mayweather eschewed defensive boxing in favor of a more fan-friendly style against Corley. Though Mayweather, 32-0 (21), dominated the fight, he still made it intriguing by standing in the pocket against "Chop Chop" and exchanging punches.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Corley got in his share of hard shots. In the fifth, Corley appeared to wobble Pretty Boy with a big right to the jaw. Earlier in the fight, Corley stunned Mayweather with a left, but Chop Chop failed to capitalize.



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Mayweather scored two knockdowns, when Corley took a knee under a hail of punches in both the eighth and 10th rounds. Corley also hit the canvas in two earlier rounds, but referee Benji Estevez ruled that Corley had been pushed in the fifth and had slipped in the sixth.

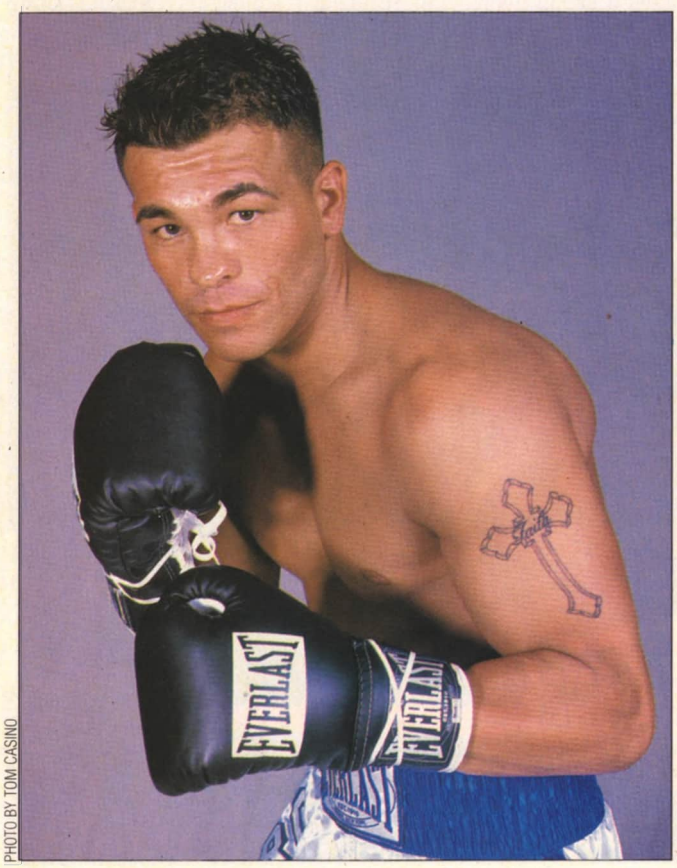
Corley, 28-3-1 (16), challenged Mayweather's chin in the third round with an overhand left that staggered Mayweather. In the fourth round, Mayweather appeared to hurt his right hand, though it didn't hinder his work rate.

In the fifth, Corley buckled Mayweather's knees with a big right followed by a left. But later in the round, it appeared that Mayweather had scored a knockdown when Corley went to one knee following a barrage of punches. Referee Benji Estevez, however, ruled that Corley had been pushed.

Mayweather, who claimed later that he hurt his left shoulder in training camp, seemed to score another knockdown in the sixth round, but Estevez ruled that a slip. It did look, however, as if the "slip" was caused by a Mayweather punch.

Finally, Mayweather registered the first of two official knockdowns in the eighth with a left-right combination, preceded by a double right uppercut that stunned Corley. Corley went down again in the 10th, taking a knee after receiving a scorching five-punch combination.

There was little debate as to who the winner was. Mayweather took the unanimous decision on the scorecards of judges Melvina Lathan (119-107), William Boodhoo (119-108), and Gale Van Hoy (118-108). THE RING scored it 117-108 for Mayweather, giving Pretty Boy nine of 12 rounds, and awarding Mayweather a 10-7 round in his dominating 10th.



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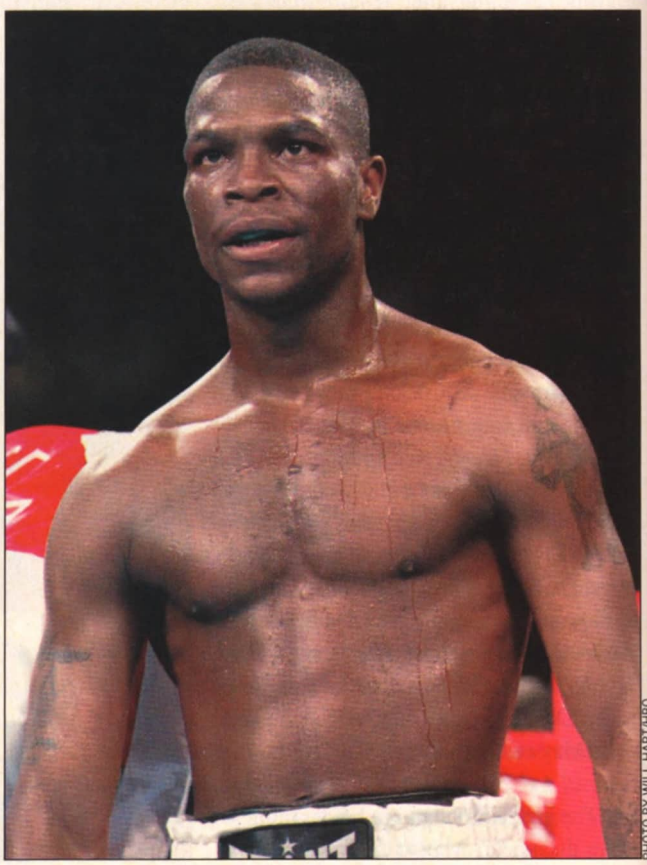


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Mayweather's future could possibly go in several directions. Among his more attractive options would be a bout with Arturo Gatti for a junior welterweight belt, or maybe another move up in weight to take on world welterweight champion Cory Spinks.

"I feel like I'm the best fighter pound-for-pound," Mayweather declared as part of a rambling monologue after the fight. "I went up to 140 and I showed I have power at 140. I have a granite chin. [I took] a good shot in the third round. We have 12 rounds. A true champion keeps coming."

Corley admitted he made a mistake in the third when he didn't pounce on his opportunity to corral the faster Mayweather. "I should have jumped right on him instead of waiting around," Corley said. "But Mayweather has a chance to make noise in the 140-pound division because of his speed and power."

Mayweather's entry at 140 gives additional spice to one of the deepest divisions in boxing, which already features Tszyu, Gatti, Ricky Hatton, Vivian Harris, and Sharmba Mitchell, plus young studs Miguel Cotto and Francisco Bojado.

Mayweather has expressed a strong desire to face Gatti, preferably at Madison Square Garden sometime later this year or in early-'05. That possibility is remote at best, since it is such a high-risk fight for Gatti. Another possibility for Mayweather, whose bout with Corley was the last on his contract with Top Rank, is to sign with Don King and take another step up in weight to face world welterweight champion Cory Spinks.

Gatti and Spinks hold the best chances for Mayweather to headline a pay-per-view card, but regardless of any future contractual moves, Mayweather has to focus on what sells. More performances like Mayweather's fan-friendly display against Corley, which was preceded by Pretty Boy's strong showing against Phillip Ndou on November 1, 2003, will surely help his marketability.

"The fight he fought against Corley is a great start," said Dan Rafael, boxing writer for *USA Today*. "I'm not saying every fight has to be a war. It's not like he doesn't have it in him, though. That's the bottom line. You have to make fans want to see you. That's the most important thing. Here's the main thing with Floyd: He's too busy chasing the money, instead of creating the money. Oscar De La Hoya created the money, and that's a problem too many of these guys get into.

"Early in Oscar's career, they were willing to take risks and it helped create a franchise. Floyd is going to have to take a step back and look at his career from a larger picture. Hopefully, that will come with maturity and age. He needs to make himself a box office draw. If he's the best, that's one thing, but that doesn't entitle him to make more than anyone else, if no one is willing to shell out the money to watch him. He's been spoiled by a lavish contract early in his career, but he has to establish himself now. I would hate to see him go through what Roy Jones has done late in his career and wait for the big pay-per-view fights then."

When Mayweather fought Corley, Rafael wasn't at ringside, as he usually is for major fights, nor was anyone from *The New York Times*, which only a few days prior to Mayweather-Corley ran a piece on Julio Cesar Chavez' so-called retirement fight against Frankie Randall.

Mayweather's last three fights were in Fresno, California, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Atlantic City. The last time he fought in Las Vegas, where he's lived for a number of years, was his rematch with Jose Luis Castillo on December 7, 2002. Clearly, Vegas casinos aren't clamoring to have one of the top pound-for-pound fighters in the world fight at their venues.

Why?

"That's not a conspiracy, it's just that Mayweather hasn't been able to beat the resistance against him," Merchant said. "He hasn't been able to break through and he hasn't figured out why. He's beaten some good fighters, but he hasn't had the major, major fight. It's a unique situation. If he fights more fights, and fights in a more crowd-pleasing style, as he did against Corley, who knows what's in his future. But a lot of things depend on him not making at any major mistakes. Talent is not enough."

In THE RING's pound-for-pound ratings, Mayweather is deservedly second, behind Hopkins and in front of Tarver. But as a public personality, Tarver leaped right over Mayweather, not only by knocking out Jones, who many thought was the best pound-for-pound fighter of the last decade, but because Tarver is glib, funny, and likes to smile. The camera loves fighters like Tarver, who said he bet on Jones before his Roy Jones rematch—Smarty Jones.

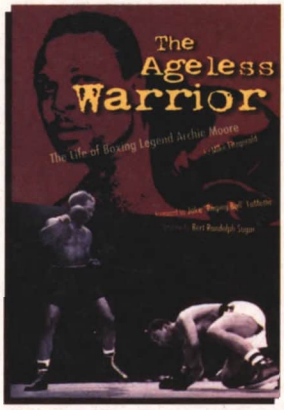
Can you imagine a smiling Mayweather turning to the camera and saying that? ■

The Ageless Warrior

THE LIFE OF BOXING LEGEND ARCHIE MOORE

by Mike Fitzgerald

co-author of *Ken Norton: Going the Distance* and *Welcome to the Big Time: The Earnie Shavers Story*



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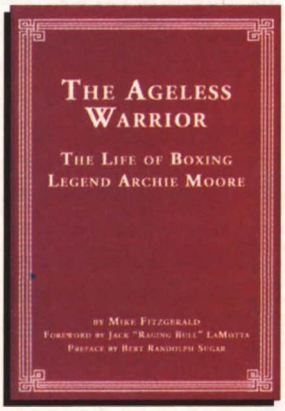

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CLASSIC COVERS

A Decade-By-Decade Look At Boxing History

Compiled by The Editors

Whenever a member of THE RING staff contacts a boxer or one of his representatives to schedule an interview, the first question asked is almost always the same: "Is it going to be the cover story?"

Even today, when television is the dominant medium for boxing, appearing on the cover of THE RING remains one of the game's ultimate status symbols, an indicator that the individual or individuals so honored have reached an elite level. But although everybody wants to be on the cover, only a handful of the thousands of boxers active at any given time make the grade. Just being a world-class boxer isn't enough. There have, in fact, been world champions who never graced the cover of THE RING.

Not all cover subjects have been boxers. The first issue featured Tex Rickard and Lord Lonsdale, a promoter and a member of the British aristocracy. But by and large, noncombatants on the cover have been an exception to the rule. Fights and fighters have always been at the core of THE RING's editorial policy, and on the few occasions when we've strayed from that guiding principle, readers have voiced their disapproval in the market place. Issues with Howard Cosell and Don King on the cover did not go platinum.

As it is the cover that sells a magazine more than anything else, our editors go to great lengths to try to select a subject with the widest possible appeal. But frequently the choice is made for us by what's occurring in the boxing world. How, for instance, could anybody other than Antonio Tarver be on the cover of this issue? His knockout of Roy Jones supersedes anything that's happened since the previous issue. Not to put "The Magic Man" on the cover would be an insult to both Tarver and our readers.

It is because events frequently override any other considerations that just glancing at 82 years worth of RING covers is tantamount to an instant history lesson. It quickly becomes clear who the major players were and which events were truly momentous.

When deciding which covers to reproduce for this special section, the editors took two things into consideration: First and foremost was historical significance; second was the aesthetic quality of the image. Some of the covers, Thomas Hearns cradling a machine gun, for instance, are still talked about years after they appeared. Others, such as the issue that announced Rocky Marciano's retirement, featuring a far less memorable photo, have almost been forgotten. Both made the cut.

Virtually all fans have their favorite RING covers, and perhaps yours is among the ones included here. But even if your favorite is missing, don't despair. As we approach our 1,000th issue, readers are invited to vote for their favorite cover (please specify the cover date of the issue) by e-mailing us at ringcovers@yahoo.com or by writing to us via "Come Out Writing." The results will be published in the special magazine we are planning to celebrate our millenary issue.

But that won't happen until next year, so in the meantime enjoy this unique look at the past 82 years in boxing, as seen through the covers of the Sweet Science's foremost publication.

1920s

Date: February 15, 1922

Cover: Tex Rickard, Lord Lonsdale

What's So Important About This Issue? It launched a publication that is still going strong 82 years later. The 24-pager (seven of which were ads) cost 20 cents. The prototype of the distinctive logo, with the tail of the R looping around to become the top of the T, was already in place.

Lead Story: Although promoter Rickard and patron Lonsdale are identified on the cover as "Creators Of Champions" in America and Europe, there was no story about either inside. Instead, an unaccredited lead article set forth the reasons the magazine was created: changing times, the benefits of boxing during the recently ended World War I, and the need to "stand rigidly against that class which seeks to take from us the spark that makes for real manhood." What it didn't say was that boxing had become such a big business that the sport, particularly Madison Square Garden, which sponsored the magazine and housed its original editorial offices, had reached a point where it needed a trade journal.

Also In This Issue: "New York State Athletic Commission: Standard For The Nations" by Nat Fleischer ... "The National Boxing Association, A Panacea For Evils" by Frank E. Coultry ... "The Lightweight Division: Benny Leonard: The Twelfth To Hold Title" by Ike Dorgan.

Date: August 1922
Cover: Benny Leonard
What's So Important About This Issue? Future Hall of Famer Leonard, who had ruled the 135-pounders since 1917, made his cover debut. Earlier in '22 he'd come very close to winning the welterweight title from Jack Britton, but lost on a foul after hitting Britton while he was down. Leonard would retire while still champ in '25, make an ill-advised comeback in '31, and then finally hang up his gloves for good in '32. Many historians still consider him the greatest lightweight champion of all-time.

Lead Story: Frank Flournoy, matchmaker for Madison Square Garden, wrote "Age And Pugilism: A Comparison Between Old-Timers And Modern Boxers." Flournoy noted that old-timers such as Bob Fitzsimmons, George Godfrey, Jem Mace, Kid McCoy, and Yankee Sullivan did well after their 40th birthdays, but that modern fighters fared best between the ages of 27 and 32.

Also In This Issue: "Harry Wills: Giant Negro Gladiator, Credit To The Game" by George P. Underwood, who wrote that Wills was a close second to Booker T. Washington in terms of status among black Americans … "John L. Sullivan Would Have Outboxed And Outhit Jack Dempsey" by Jack Sheehan … "The History Of Boxing, Part Six" by Nat Fleischer concentrated on James Figg, the first champion of the bare-knuckle era.

Date: January 1923
Cover: Pancho Villa
What's So Important About This Issue? Filipino Villa, who was soon to become Asia's first world champion, was already a big enough star in America to warrant a cover, having beaten such top-notch fighters such as Johnny Buff, Abe Goldstein, and Terry Martin. In June 1923, Villa would kayo Jimmy Wilde to win the flyweight championship.

Lead Story: "Putting It Over: Tex Rickard Explains How To Succeed At Promoting" by Ike Dorgan. Among the things Rickard told Dorgan were: "Half the success of promoting is taking a chance. The other half is knowing one chance from another … If our greatest promoters didn't know that rule of the game, P.T. Barnum and a few others would have been grocery clerks."

Also In This Issue: "Ballplayers vs. Boxers: Which Last The Longer" by Frederick C. Lieb, president of the Baseball Writers Association. Lieb concluded that generally baseball players have longer careers, but don't do as well late in their career as some top boxers … This was also the first Christmas issue, featuring holiday greetings ads from the likes of Jack Dempsey, Harry Greb, Benny Leonard, and Leonard's manager, Billy Gibson. Promoter Herman Taylor used his Christmas ad to extol the virtues of Patsy Wallace, who called out Villa and Joe Lynch.

1920s

1920s

Date: July 1925

Cover: Harry Greb, Mickey Walker, Charley Weinert, Harry Wills

What's So Important About This Issue? The inclusion of heavyweight contender Wills among four of the fighters scheduled to appear on a charity card to aid the Italian Hospital Fund marked the first time a black boxer graced the cover of the magazine.

Cover Story: Instead of hyping the upcoming charity show featuring the cover subjects, the story, written by Francis Albertanti, focused on promoter Humbert J. Fugazy and was titled, "Fugazy Sets Pace For Promoters: Italian Hospital Fund Bouts Greatest Outdoor Show In Modern Ring History." The card came off as scheduled, with Greb decisioning Walker and Wills stopping Weinert in front of approximately 40,000 fans at the Polo Grounds.

Also In This Issue: "As We See It: Crisp Comment On Current Ring Problems" by Nat Fleischer … "My Hardest Fight" by Eddie "Cannonball" Martin … "One-Eyed Connelly: The World Champion Gate Crasher Of the World" by Eldora Field … "More About Sluggers" by Jack Kofoed … "How Young Griffo Started His Career" by Tim McGrath … "Minute Rests Between Rounds" by Eddie Borden … "Last Bare-Knuckle Fight Under London Prize Ring Rules" by Al Spink … "Shelby Only A Shell, Living On Its Dempsey-Gibbons Memories" by Paul R. Mallon.

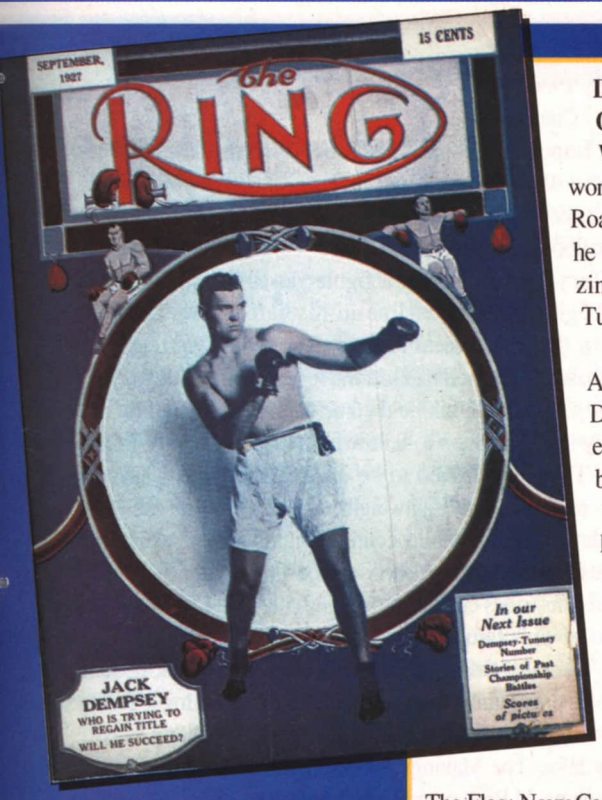
Date: November 1925

Cover: James J. Walker

What's So Important About This Issue? Walker was not the only politician to be featured on the cover, but he was undoubtedly the one who did the most to promote the Sweet Science. When fight fan Walker was elected to the New York State Senate in 1915, boxing was illegal in the state. But in 1920, he introduced the bill that legalized professional boxing in New York.

Cover Story: "Senator James J. Walker: Champion Of Sports" by Francis Albertanti lauded Walker for all he'd done for boxing and urged readers qualified to vote in New York City to work toward Walker's election as mayor. How much the magazine's endorsement helped is hard to know, but Walker was elected in '25 and then reelected mayor in '29. Unfortunately, evidence of graft was uncovered in '32, and Walker resigned. When Walker died in '46, the Boxing Writers Association of American named its award for long and meritorious service to the sport after him. Walker was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1992.

Also In This Issue: "Supermen Of The Ring" by Vernon Van Ness … "Bout With Gunboat Smith Turning Point In Jack Dempsey's Career" by Frank Herman … "Training And Exercises For Boxers And Other Athletes" by Nat Fleischer.



Date: September 1927
Cover: Jack Dempsey

What's So Important About This Issue? Although Dempsey won the heavyweight title in 1919 and held it throughout most of the Roaring Twenties, he was an ex-champ on the comeback trail when he was featured on the cover for only the second time in the magazine's history. Despite being displaced as champion by Gene Tunney, Dempsey's popularity was at an all-time high.

Cover Story: "In Effort To Regain Title, Dempsey Aspires To A Feat Never Achieved In Heavyweight Class" by Daniel M. Daniel looked at other former heavyweight champions' failed efforts to regain the title and evaluated Dempsey's chances of being the first to succeed.

Also In This Issue: Dempsey was coming off a controversial knockout of Jack Sharkey earlier in the year, which was the subject of an opinion poll of 33 insiders entitled "Did Jack Dempsey Hit Low? Or Did He Win Fairly?" Those who thought Dempsey had fouled edged those who thought he won fairly by a narrow 16 to 15 margin. Two of those asked were unsure … "Kid Lavigne: Champion Lazy Man Of The Ring" by Biddy Bishop … "Leo P. Flynn: Man Of The Hour" by Francis Albertanti … "Freddy Welsh Mourned By Fans" by Nat Fleischer … "Boxing Follows The Flag: Navy Carries Manly Art To All Parts Of World" by Capt. Hiene Miller.

Date: October 1927
Cover: Gene Tunney

What's So Important About This Issue? This was the first time Tunney was on the cover since he beat Jack Dempsey for the heavyweight championship the previous year.

Cover Story: "Gene Of The Steel Nerves: An Intimate Picture Of Tunney, The Man Who Flew To Challenge A Champion" by Francis Albertanti. The author did a good job of tracing Tunney's life and career from his birth in Greenwich Village, New York, to his title-winning bout with Dempsey. Less successful was Albertanti's attempt to draw comparisons between the heavyweight champ and aviation pioneer Charles Lindberg, who made the first nonstop flight across the Atlantic Ocean in May '27. As a companion piece to the cover story, there was a montage of Tunney photos under the heading "The Only Conqueror Of Dempsey." Guess they forgot Jack Downey, "Fireman" Jim Flynn, and Willie Meehan, all of whom had defeated Dempsey prior to Tunney.

Also In This Issue: "Hard Hitters Worth Weight In Gold" by Ike Dorgan … "Knockout Brigade Of Past Superior To Those Of Present Day" by Charles F. Mathison … "Dempsey Is Sports' Highest Paid Man" by Grover Theis … "The Days Of The Great White Hope Tournaments" by Billy McCarney … "Macbeth Of The Maulies: Shakespeare Up To Date" by Daniel M. Daniels.

1920s

1930s

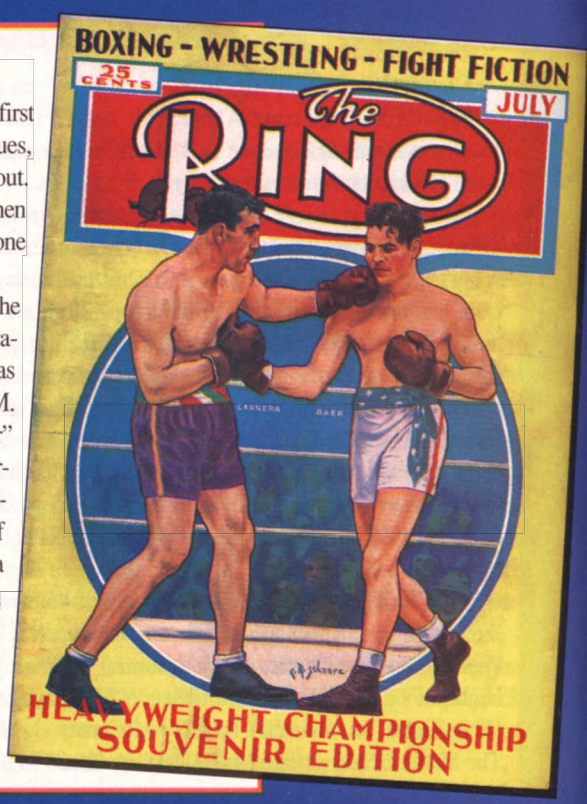
Date: January 1930

Cover: Tony Canzoneri

What's So Important About This Issue? With the dawn of a new decade came the dawn of a new era in THE RING: full-color covers. And the first cover boy in color was Canzoneri, a future Hall of Famer and one of the defining fighters of the '30s.

Cover Story: Usually when a fighter loses the world title, it marks the beginning of a decline in his career, but THE RING observed how that didn't seem to be the case with Canzoneri. The New York-based Canzoneri had lost the featherweight title to Andre Routis in September '28, but he'd come back to win 16 of his next 17 (the only loss a decision to fellow future Hall of Famer Sammy Mandell). The story proved to be on the money, as Canzoneri would go on to win the lightweight title in 1930 and the junior welter title in '31 and would continue fighting on a world-class level until retiring in '39, following the first and only stoppage loss of his illustrious career.

Also In This Issue: "RING Announces Dempsey Will Rank Boxers" revealed that with the death of promoter Tex Rickard, who had previously compiled THE RING rankings, former heavyweight champ Jack Dempsey would be taking over … "They Have The Makings Of A Champion," a photo feature on Panama Al Brown and Kid Chocolate.



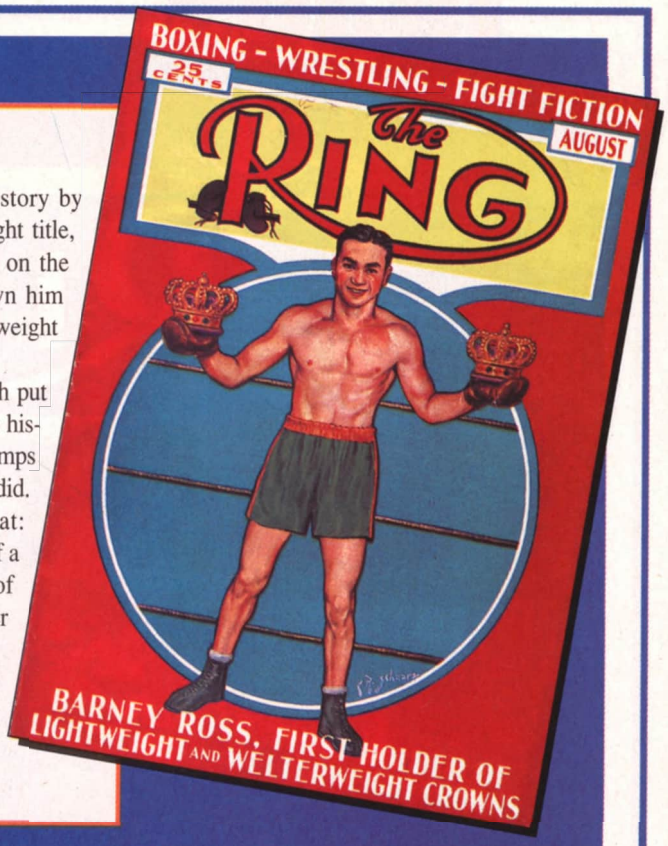
Date: July 1934

Cover: Primo Carnera, Max Baer (illustration by C.R. Schaare)

What's So Important About This Issue? This was one of the first of THE RING's "Heavyweight Championship Souvenir Edition" issues, featuring an attractive illustration of Carnera and Baer slugging it out. Any fight for the heavyweight title was hugely important back when there was only one champion, and Baer-Carnera in particular was one of the most hotly anticipated fights of the early-'30s.

Cover Story: Seven feature stories, spread over 14 pages in the front of the magazine, were dedicated to previewing the Carnera-Baer championship fight from a variety of angles. The lead story was entitled "Colossal Carnera And Belting Baer," and author Daniel M. Daniel commented that Carnera's development into a "real fighter" and Baer's knockout of Max Schmeling gave the match "an importance which ranked it with the outstanding engagements of the history of modern heavyweight jousting, back to the brawly times of John L." There were also stories proclaiming that Carnera was not a "circus freak," reviewing the history of heavyweight champs from California (Baer was about to become one, via 11th-round knockout), and commenting on the rapidity of Baer's rise.

Also In This Issue: "[Barney] Ross Sets Ring History" by Nat Fleischer … "Boxing In The U.S. Navy" by Tom Stevens … "Feet And The Boxer" by Ross E. Kauffman.



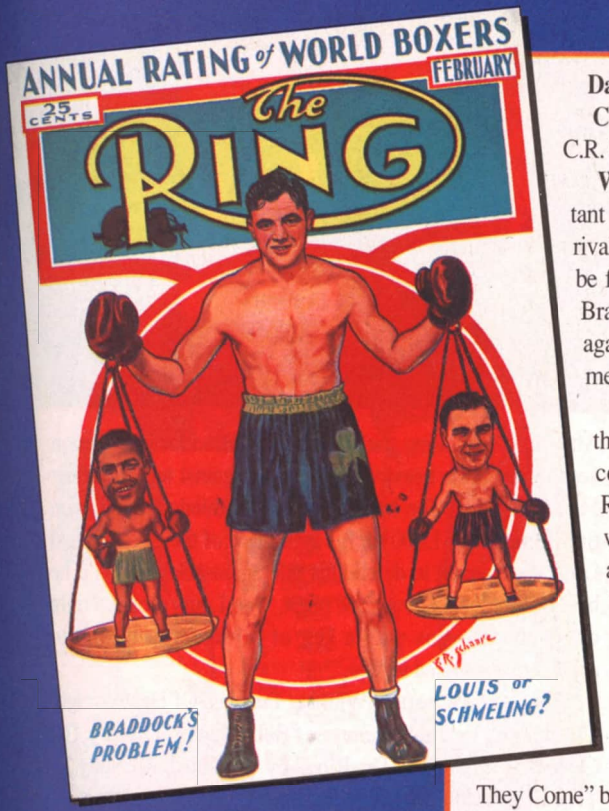
Date: August 1934

Cover: Barney Ross (illustration by C.R. Schaare)

What's So Important About This Issue? Ross made history by becoming the first lightweight champion to win the welterweight title, and THE RING celebrated his achievement by depicting Ross on the cover holding his two crowns. We actually could have shown him wearing a third one on his head, but Ross' world junior welterweight title was not all that highly regarded at the time.

Cover Story: In "Ross' Unique Record," writer Ed W. Smith put Ross' decision win over Jimmy McLarnin for the welter title into historical perspective, discussing some of the other lightweight champs who tried, or would have liked to have tried, to do what Ross did. Smith actually diminished Ross' accomplishment somewhat: "Barney Ross did a wonderful thing," Smith wrote, "but outside of a fat pot of gold and everlasting fame, what he won in a way of another title didn't amount to so much. The welter crown has never meant anything near as much as did the lightweight honors."

Also In This Issue: "Standing On Pinnacle, [Max] Baer Surveys Field" by Daniel M. Daniel … "Fighting Hearts" by George T. Pardy … "Arthur Pelkey: His Blow Stunned The Fistic World" by Billy Roche.



Date: February 1937

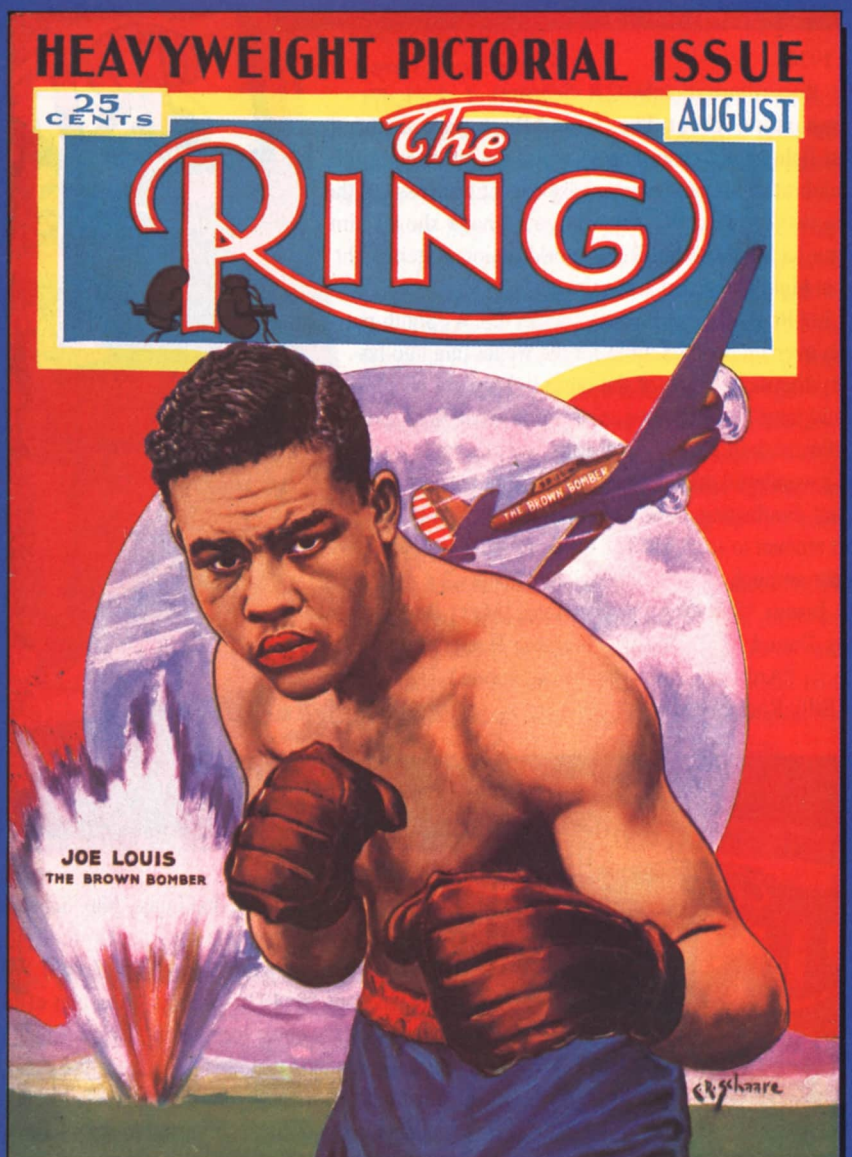
Cover: Jim Braddock, Joe Louis, Max Schmeling (illustration by C.R. Schaare)

What's So Important About This Issue? With the most important fighter of the 1930s—Louis—and two of his most significant rivals all on the cover together in this amusing illustration, it should be fairly obvious why this issue made the cut. Unlikely champion Braddock was stuck with the tough choice of whether to defend against Louis or Schmeling, and as we all know, he chose the former and launched a new era in sports.

Lead Story: There wasn't a cover story, per se, but each of the cover fighters were featured in full-page photos over the course of a 16-page section by Nat Fleischer revealing THE RING's ratings for the year 1936. Fleischer wrote that Schmeling, who conquered Louis in a colossal upset in June '36, stood out as the "most vital fighter of the year," with Louis second and "Cinderella Man" Braddock third. In rating fighters in every division based strictly on what they did in '36, Fleischer named such notables as John Henry Lewis, Freddie Steele, and Barney Ross as tops in their weight classes.

Also In This Issue: "I Pick Schmeling" by Jack Dempsey … "What Of 1937 In Fistiana?" by Hype Igoe … "Tough As They Come" by Bob Edgren … "Gilded Age Of Boxing" by Daniel M. Daniel.

1930s



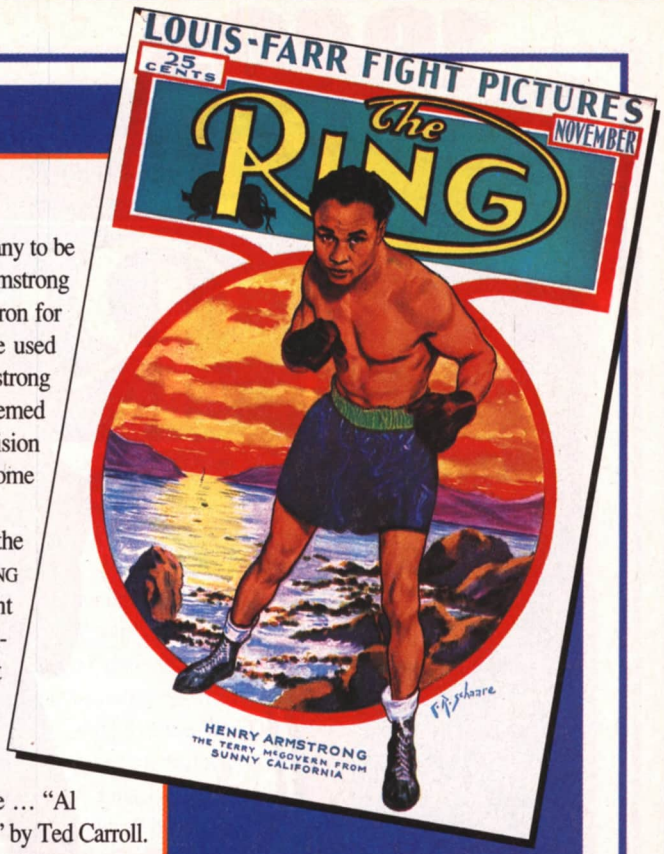
Date: August 1937

Cover: Joe Louis (illustration by C.R. Schaare)

What's So Important About This Issue? On the eve of his heavyweight title challenge of Jim Braddock, "The Brown Bomber" became the first black fighter to grace the cover solo—and it would prove one of the most memorable covers in the magazine's history thanks to the brown fighter plane dropping bombs in the background. The 31 covers Louis appeared on in the '30s and '40s made him by far the leader over that span, and this was probably his most noteworthy.

Lead Story: With the Louis-Braddock bout looming, Hype Igoe took a look at "The Schmeling-Braddock Aftermath," detailing the fallout from Braddock's decision not to defend the heavyweight crown against top contender Max Schmeling. The New York State Athletic Commission fined Braddock $1,000 for his avoidance of the German, and Louis then agreed to defend his title against Schmeling if he bested Braddock. Or, as Igoe put it, "Joe Louis dropped right out of the heavens with a keg of oil under each arm to appease the troubled waters."

Also In This Issue: "Winning Punches Of Heavyweight Champions" by The Veteran … "Bob Pastor's Rise" by Ted Carroll … "Humor In The Ring" by William J. McNulty … "The British Comeback" by Robert Edgren.



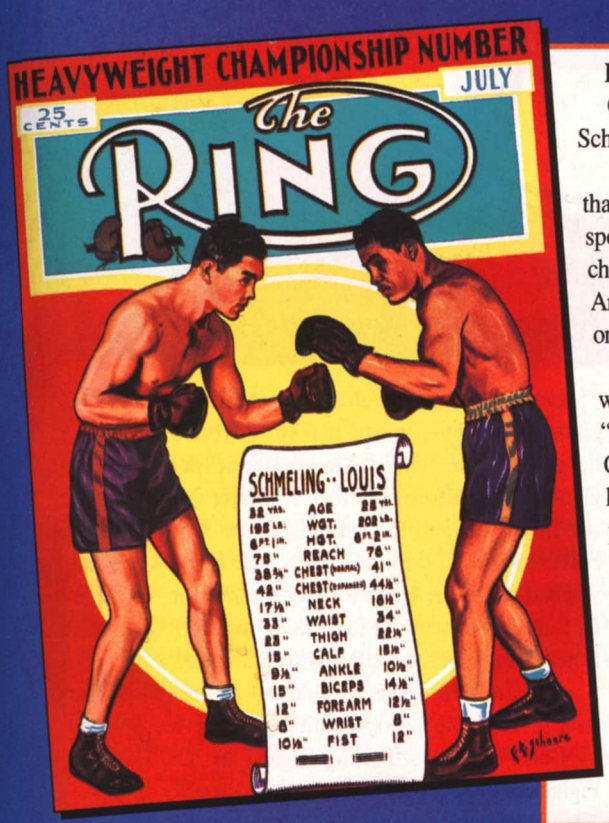
Date: November 1937

Cover: Henry Armstrong (illustration by C.R. Schaare)

What's So Important About This Issue? Now considered by many to be among the top two or three fighters, pound-for-pound, of all-time, Armstrong appeared on his first cover immediately after knocking out Petey Sarron for the featherweight title. (Interestingly, the same illustration would be used again on the April '41 cover of THE RING.) The cover line called Armstrong "The Terry McGovern From Southern California," and it probably seemed a kind comparison at the time. But as the years went on, three-division king Armstrong would easily surpass the accomplishments of fearsome former feather champ McGovern.

Lead Story: Most of the talk throughout the magazine was about the August '37 Joe Louis-Tommy Farr heavyweight title bout, with RING founder Nat Fleischer penning the story "Farr's Courageous Fight Stresses Flaws In Louis." Louis was expected to knock the Welsh challenger out with ease, but instead it was a competitive fight that went the full 15 rounds. "To the Brown Bomber went the honors of the day so far as the verdict was concerned," Fleischer wrote. "To Farr went the glory of a brave stand against tremendous odds."

Also In This Issue: "Schmeling Gets His Chance" by Hype Igoe … "Al Hostak: Fred Steele's Rival" by J.C. Grant … "New Knockout Artists" by Ted Carroll.



Date: July 1938

Cover: Max Schmeling, Joe Louis (illustration by C.R. Schaare)

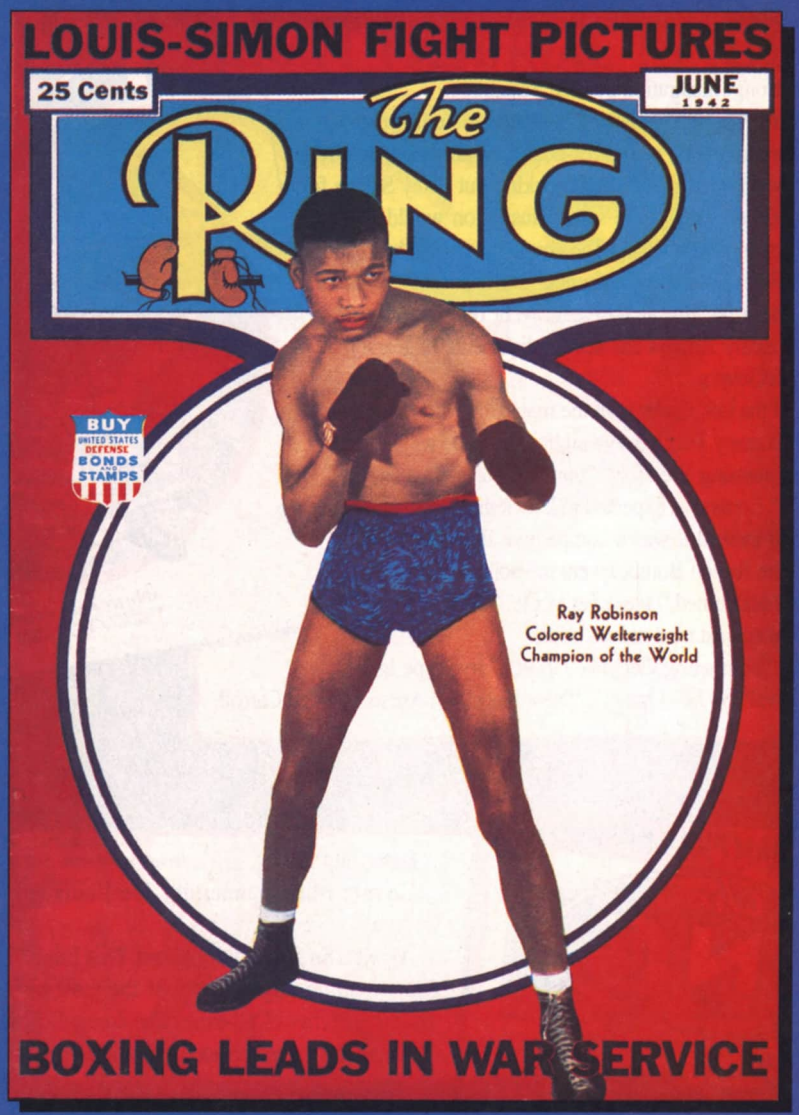
What's So Important About This Issue? It previewed a fight that would go down as one of the most historically significant sporting events of all-time. The Louis-Schmeling heavyweight championship rematch had unparalleled political implications—an American vs. a German as World War II loomed—and became one of those rare sports contests for which the earth stood still.

Cover Story: Eighteen pages in the front of the magazine were devoted to the heavyweight title showdown, including "Fleischer Picks Louis To Stop Schmeling" by Nat Fleischer. Citing his belief "that the champion has learned how to protect himself against the devastating right of the German," Fleischer picked Louis to knock out Schmeling within 12 rounds. As it turned out, Fleischer, always a huge Louis supporter, underestimated just how dominant "The Brown Bomber" would be at Yankee Stadium. Louis brutalized Schmeling inside of one round, making himself a national hero and immeasurably enhancing his fighting legend.

Also In This Issue: "Handicap Matches" by Hype Igoe … "Veteran Reminisces" by A.D. Phillips … "Boxing's Big Shots" by T.W. McNeil.

1930s

1940s



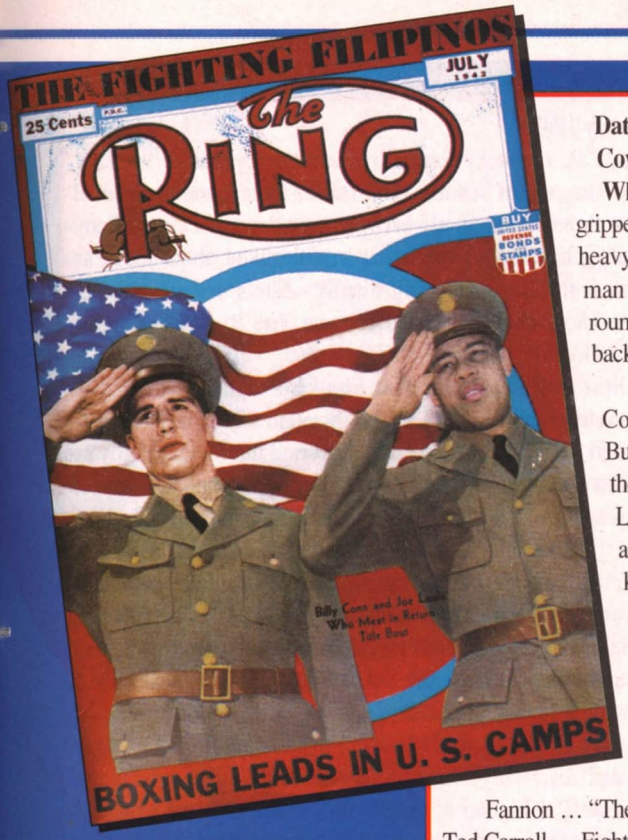
Date: June 1942

Cover: Ray Robinson

What's So Important About This Issue? This was the first time Sugar Ray Robinson ever appeared on the cover of THE RING, with a brief description of Robinson's victory over Norman Rubio inside. Robinson went on to become, in the opinion of many, the greatest pound-for-pound fighter who ever donned boxing gloves, but at the time, RING Editor Nat Fleischer wondered if Robinson would ever be a true world champion, because of World War II. The line next to Robinson's cover shot was a reflection of the times: "Ray Robinson Colored Welterweight Champion Of The World."

Lead Story: Fleischer wrote about heavyweight champ Joe Louis taking a respite from Army life to defend the title against Abe Simon at Madison Square Garden. "The Brown Bomber's" timing was slightly off, but Louis was still too formidable for Simon, who was battered for six rounds before the fight was finally stopped. With the United States involved in World War II, Louis' bout with Simon hauled in $64,980.02, which Louis turned over to the Army Relief Fund.

Also In This Issue: A pictorial of the Louis-Simon bout … "Boxing's Contributions To Service Splendid" by Dan Daniel … "Boxing Styles" by Ted Carroll … Fighter of the Month: Joe Louis.



Date: July 1942

Cover: Billy Conn, Joe Louis

What's So Important About This Issue? With the United States gripped by World War II, the nation turned to its sporting heroes, like heavyweight champ Louis and light heavyweight champ Conn, the man who pushed "The Brown Bomber" through 13 memorable rounds in '41 before losing by knockout. With the flag flying in the background, this was a patriotic cover for the ages.

Cover Story: Dan Daniel broached the topic of how Louis and Conn influenced the war effort. Louis' title defenses against Buddy Baer and Abe Simon generated a total of $154,072 to aid the families of injured servicemen. The story also pointed out that Louis, though a world-renowned celebrity at the time, never asked for any special favors. Pro sports were geared toward keeping up morale on the home front, to "take folks' minds off the horrors of war." What was also mentioned in the story was the great work done by RING Editor Nat Fleischer, who made the rounds to various military camps with the fighters. Fleischer found that the War Department was poorly lacking in supplying servicemen with boxing equipment.

Also In This Issue: "Heavies Don Uniform" by Mark Fannon … "The Fighting Filipinos" by Bill Miller … "Gestures Of Mercy" By Ted Carroll … Fighter of the Month: Chalky Wright.

Date: November 1944

Cover: Bob Montgomery, Beau Jack

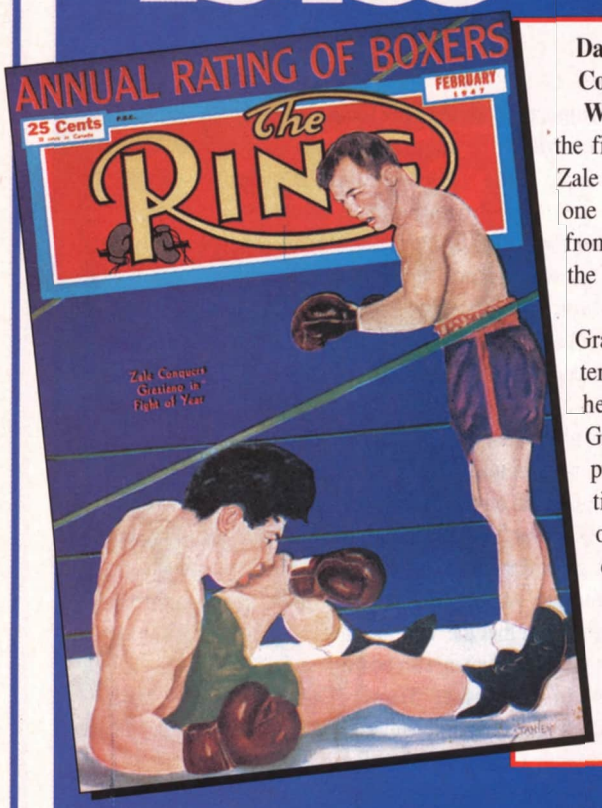
What's So Important About This Issue? As World War II was winding down, lightweight rivals Montgomery and Jack got together and grossed a record sum of $35,864,900 for war bonds by fighting without pay in New York. Jack won the non-title bout, but there was no further mention of the fight in this issue.

Lead Story: Sgt. Benjamin Goldberg gave RING readers a closer glimpse at how boxing provided a tremendous tension relief to the soldiers on the front lines. Goldberg detailed a story of how a group of soldiers, fresh off driving the Japanese from Cape Gloucester, built a makeshift training area in a coconut grove in a jungle in New Britain. Ringposts were made of steel bridge piers, punching bags were reinforced seabags filled with sawdust, and bandages lifted from a hospital were cut and sewn to make crude athletic supporters. Thousands showed up in the coconut grove to show their support. "Boxing in this neck of the woods, in jungle land, is a recreation, and no other sport affords so much pleasure to the lads than fisticuffs," Goldberg concluded.

Also In This Issue: "GI Risks Sight To Get A Glimpse Of Joe Louis" by Pvt. Tom Ephrem … Fighter of the Month: Manuel Ortiz.

1940s

1940s



Date: February 1947

Cover: Tony Zale vs. Rocky Graziano (illustration by Stanley Weston)

What's So Important About This Issue? This issue chronicled the first of the three classic duels between middleweight rivals Tony Zale and Rocky Graziano, a series that is still talked about today as one of the most thrilling in boxing history. Zale's dramatic come-from-behind victory enabled him to become THE RING's Fighter of the Year for 1946.

Cover Story: RING Editor Nat Fleischer detailed the Zale-Graziano slugfest, won by Zale via sixth-round knockout. The battered Zale had to be propped up and led around the ring carefully as he waved to the crowd after his left hook finished Graziano. Graziano was considered a tough middleweight with a hellacious punch, yet "The Man Of Steel" consented to risk the middleweight title, and it paid off. Part of the criteria for determining the Fighter of the Year back then involved having a personal life that was free of scandal. While Joe Louis, Ray Robinson, Tommy Bell, and Tippy Larkin were also considered for Fighter of the Year, it was Zale who took home the honors.

Also In This Issue: "[Marcel] Cerdan Will Do, Say Americans" by Jersey Jones … "Little Rhody's Fistic Stars" by Danny Nardi … Fighter of the Month: Marcel Cerdan.

Date: May 1949

Cover: Kid Gavilan (illustration by Stanley Weston)

What's So Important About This Issue? Though Gavilan was overshadowed somewhat by Ray Robinson, he was still one of the finest and most popular fighters of the '40s, and the artwork made this cover especially appealing. But though Gavilan's image adorned the cover, with the palm trees of his native Cuba swaying in the background, there was no mention of the future welterweight champ in the issue.

Lead Story: After defending the heavyweight title a record 25 times, Joe Louis decided to announce his retirement from the ring following a tour of the Caribbean. Tagging along with "The Brown Bomber" was ubiquitous RING Editor Nat Fleischer, providing the color and reaction of awestruck fans. Fleischer was a little awestruck himself, writing: "The 'Dark Destroyer' came to the end of his great career standing upright instead of groveling in the rosin dust as was the case with most of his predecessors. His reign will always be recalled as one in which boxing was dominated by a fearless, two-fisted, murderous hitter who was ever willing to give every possible challenger an opportunity to dethrone him." Unfortunately, as we all know now, Louis did not end his "great career standing upright," as this retirement did not last long.

Also In This Issue: "Joe Louis Remembers Forgotten Man Walcott" by Sid Feder … "Sucker Fights" by Harvey Thorne … "The Lost Art" by Jersey Jones … Fighter of the Month: Laurent Dauthuille.

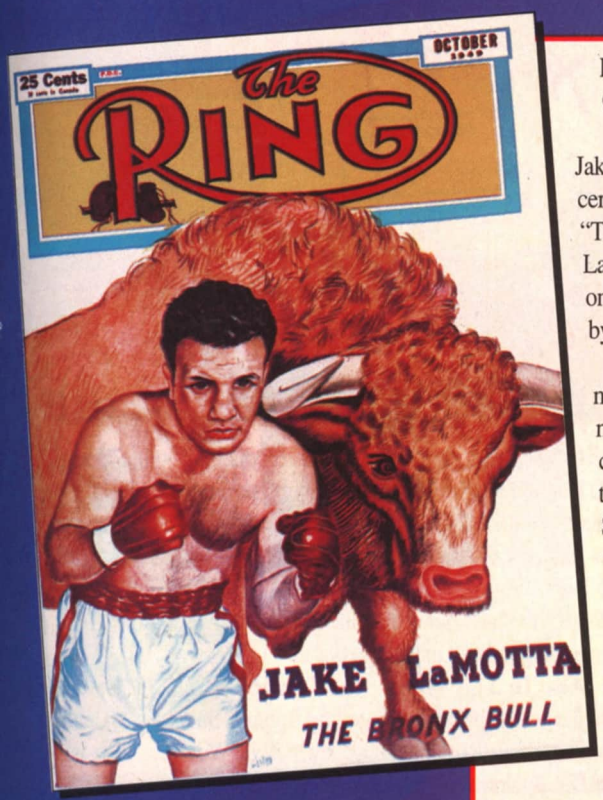
Date: July 1949

Cover: Willie Pep (illustration by Stanley Weston)

What's So Important About This Issue? Pep, generally regarded as the greatest featherweight of all-time, had just recaptured the title from Sandy Saddler in the second of the four epic bouts between the two legendary fighters. Though the illustration of "The Will O' The Wisp" made for an attractive and memorable cover, there was no feature story on Pep in this issue.

Lead Story: Before there was Don King and Bob Arum, there were promotional entities like the International Boxing Club, which was owned by Madison Square Garden and had Joe Louis holding a figurehead position as its leader. Writer Dan Daniel felt the IBC, which took over as the lead promoter in boxing for Mike Jacobs' defunct Twentieth Century Sporting Club, was going to be good for boxing. Daniel speculated that the IBC would revive interest in big city boxing, cleaning up the unsavory characters and undercover managers that were present in the fight game. The IBC, however, faced a major challenge from the outset: A popular and long-reigning heavyweight champ—Louis—just departed the world stage (or so it seemed), and there wasn't a heavyweight at the time that appeared ready to fill the void.

Also In This Issue: "Sugar Ray Has His Say" by Ted Carroll … "They Seldom Retire While Still Good" by Art Wilson … Fighter of the Month: Honore Pratesi.



Date: October 1949

Cover: Jake LaMotta (illustration by Stanley Weston)

What's So Important About This Issue? The depiction of Jake LaMotta on the cover with a bull in the background was certainly eye-catching. Inside, there were three pictures showing "The Bronx Bull" and his progression to the middleweight title: LaMotta defeating Marcel Cerdan for the middleweight championship, knocking down Tommy Yarosz, and earning a title shot by knocking out Joey DeJohn.

Lead Story: With the retirement of Joe Louis, the dominant heavyweight of the era, the boxing world scrambled for a new champ and Ezzard Charles was thought of as the leading candidate, according to Editor Nat Fleischer. Charles had just taken apart Gus Lesnevich in front of 16,630 at Yankee Stadium on the hottest day of the year. Fleischer pointed out that Charles went into the fight with fire in his eyes, fueled by criticism over his work rate in his previous fight and by the fact that THE RING and the New York Commission did not consider him the heavyweight champion of the world. Charles was out to prove his ownership of the heavyweight title, and Lesnevich suffered as a result.

Also In This Issue: "[James] Norris New Type Of Ring Executive" by Dan Daniel … "[Ike] Williams Great In Victory" by Harry Winkler … Fighter of the Month: Ezzard Charles.

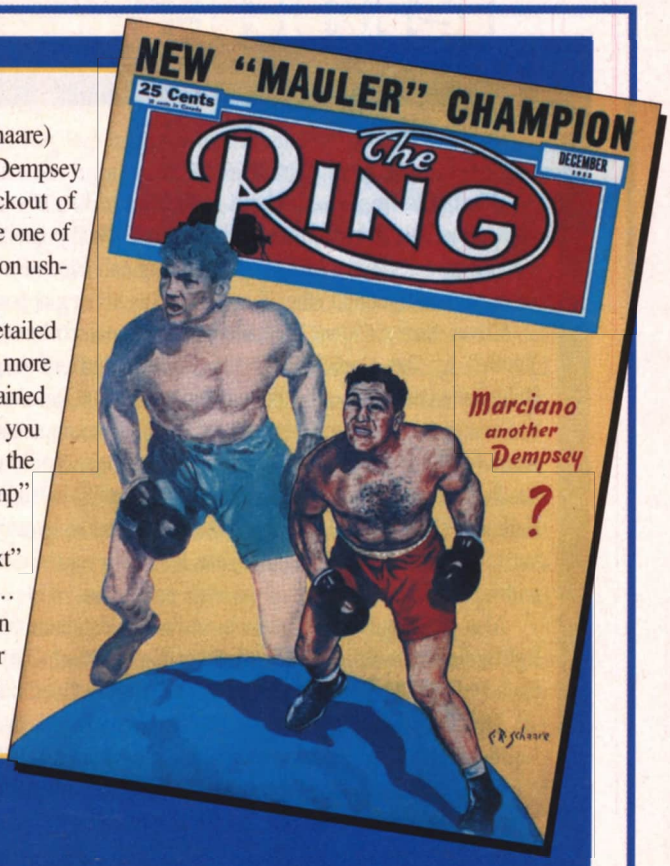
Date: November 1952

Cover: Archie Moore

What's So Important About This Issue? Future Hall of Famer Moore was closing in on his 39th birthday and already had 169 pro bouts under his belt when this issue hit the newsstands. But as was made obvious by C.R. Schaare's cover illustration of Moore chasing a winged crown, he still hadn't received a much-deserved and overdue title shot. Fittingly, "Ancient Archie" would win the light heavyweight title the following month (December '52) and go on to hold the 175-pound title longer than anyone in history and also set an all-time knockout mark with a career total of 141.

Cover Story: In "Why Is Moore Poison?", writer Daniel M. Daniel tries to answer the question posed by the headline. Charley Johnson, who managed Moore at the time, compared his fighter's situation to that of great fighters of the past such as Sam Langford, Harry Wills, and Peter Jackson, all of whom were kept out of the title picture for two reasons: They were too good and they were black.

Also In This Issue: "The Champ's Edge" by Barney Nagler … "Upsets For Sale" by Johnny Salak … "[Gene] Tunney Likes Rocky's Spirit" by Wilbur Wood … "The Isle Of Disappointment" by Jersey Jones … Fighter of the Month: South African flyweight Jake Tuli.



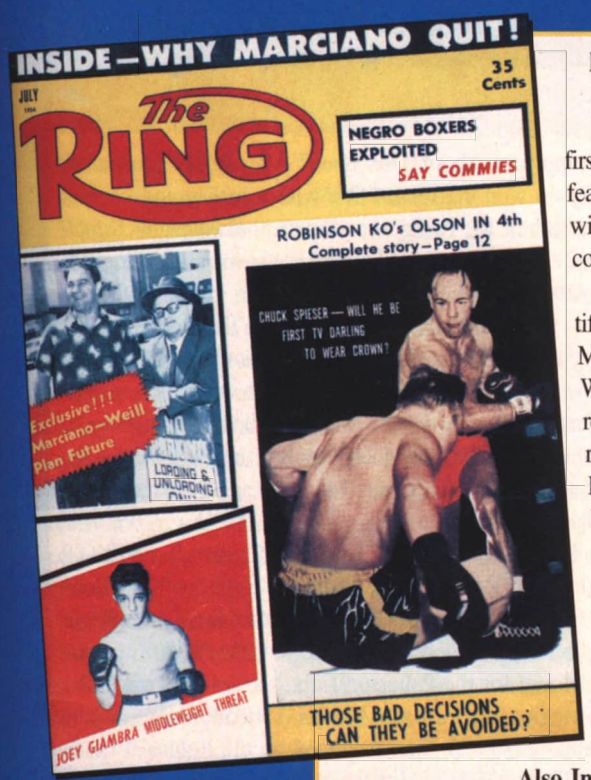
Date: December 1952

Cover: Rocky Marciano, Jack Dempsey (illustration by C.R. Schaare)

What's So Important About This Issue? Comparisons to Jack Dempsey notwithstanding, this issue covered Marciano's title-winning knockout of Jersey Joe Walcott. "The Brockton Blockbuster" would soon become one of the most popular heavyweight champions in history, and his coronation ushered in a new era of prosperity for the game's premiere division.

Cover Story: "The Story With A Punch" by Nat Fleischer detailed Marciano's epic, up-from-the floor victory over Walcott in front of more than 40,000 fans at Philadelphia's Municipal Stadium. "Thrills, sustained action, suspense, expectation, and a dramatic finish. What more could you ask for," wrote Fleischer. Fourteen photos of the fight accompanied the cover story. Other Marciano-related articles included "Meet The Champ" by Daniel M. Daniels and "Socko, What A Hit!" by Barney Nagler.

Also in This Issue: "[Kid] Gavilan Wants [Ray] Robinson Next" by Nat Fleischer ... "Southpaw Favorites" by Ted Carroll ... "[Jimmy] Carter Back On The Throne" by Nat Fleischer ... "Then And Now" by Al Buck ... "TV Boxing" by Johnny Salak ... Fighter of the Month: Lightweight champion Carter, who had just regained the title from Lauro Salas.



Date: July 1956

Cover: Rocky Marciano, Al Weill, Joey Giambra, Chuck Spieser

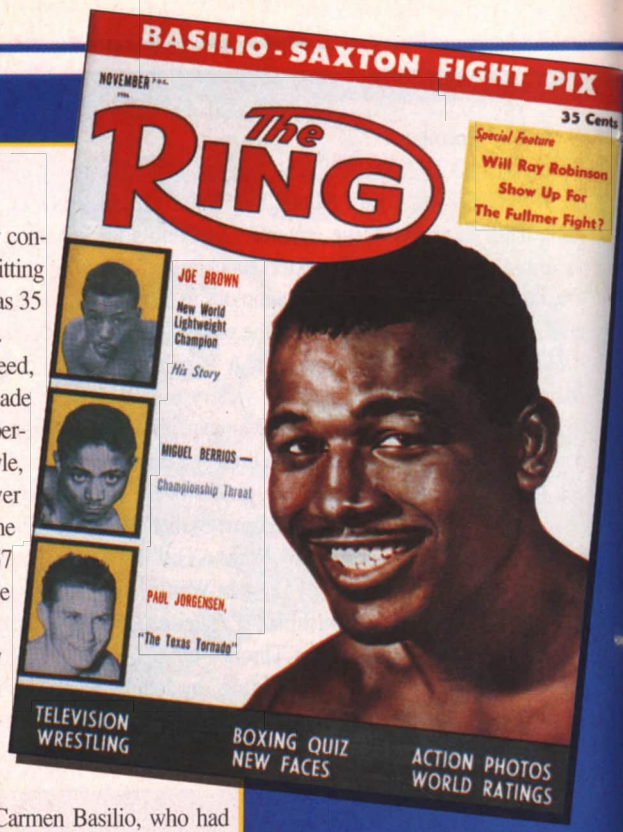
What's So Important About This Issue? Marciano became the first and, to date, only heavyweight champion to retire with an undefeated professional record. This has become an even bigger deal with the passing of time, as no heavyweight champion since has come close to duplicating "The Rock's" feat.

Cover Story: Oddly, the photograph of Spieser and an unidentified opponent was the most prominent photo on the cover, but Marciano's retirement was clearly the major story of the month. "I Won't Be Back ... Says Marciano" by Dan Daniels delves into the reason behind Marciano's somewhat abrupt abdication. Having run out of attractive opponents is one reason suggested, but Daniels came much closer to the real story when he wrote, "It has been said that some of the circumstances which helped Marciano make up his mind developed from the International Boxing Club's troubles from its defense of a federal suit, from the California Cox investigation, and from unsavory ring outcropping in general." The truth was that Marciano was tired of dealing with Weill, his dictatorial manager, and the IBC, which was dissolved in '59 following the U.S. Justice Department's successful anti-trust suit.

Also In This Issue: "Robbie Owns [Bobo] Olson" by Bill Miller ... "Italians Make Ring History" by Ted Carroll ... Fighter of the Month: Ray Robinson.

1950s

1950s



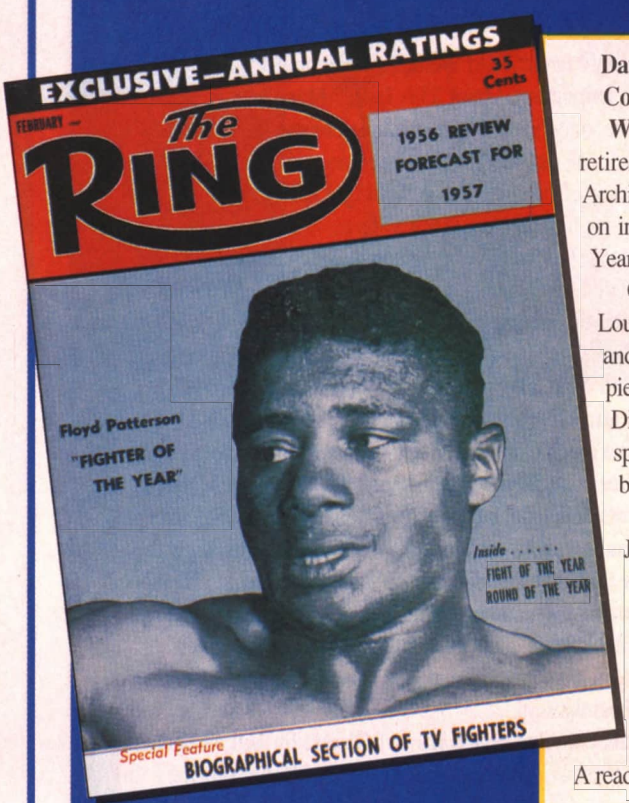
Date: November 1956

Cover: Sugar Ray Robinson

What's So Important About This Issue? The man widely considered the best fighter, pound-for-pound, of all-time was still sitting atop the middleweight division, but the original "Sugar Ray" was 35 years old and fighting Father Time as well as his ring opponents.

Cover Story: "Does Robinson Fear [Gene] Fullmer's Speed, Youth?" by Dan Daniels looked at promoters' efforts to persuade Robinson to defend the 160-pound belt against THE RING's number-one contender, Fullmer. Due to Robinson's tough negotiating style, some felt he was afraid of his young challenger, and the cover headline pointedly asked: "Will Ray Robinson Show Up For The Fullmer Fight?" He did, losing the title to Fullmer in January 1957 via 15-round decision. Later that year, Robinson regained the title with a fifth-round knockout of the Utah strongman.

Also In This Issue: There were two articles about the new lightweight champion: "Joe Brown: New Champ" by Nat Fleischer and "Joe Brown: His Story" by Murray Goodman … "Is The TV Boxing Public Sick Of Mediocre Fare?" by Nat Loubet … "When Is Enough?" by Jersey Jones … "Man Against Fate" by Lester Bromberg … Fighter of the Month: Carmen Basilio, who had regained the welterweight title from Johnny Saxton.



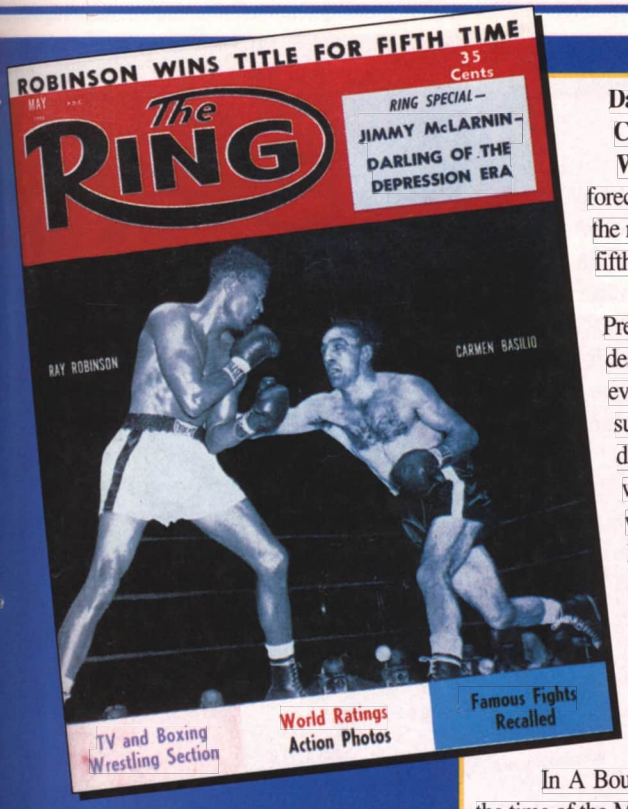
Date: February 1957

Cover: Floyd Patterson

What's So Important About This Issue? After Rocky Marciano's retirement, Patterson won the vacant title with a fifth-round kayo of Archie Moore to become the youngest undisputed heavyweight champion in history at 21. The feat earned him the magazine's Fighter of the Year Award for 1956.

Cover Story: "Floyd Patterson: Fighter Of The Year" by Nat Loubet revealed that Patterson was the unanimous choice of the staff and its correspondents for top honors. Loubet also wrote a companion piece about Patterson's victory over Moore entitled, "How Patterson Did It," in which he noted that Moore "looked tired and lacking the sparkle expected of a title contender" at the weigh-in the afternoon before the fight.

Also In This Issue: "Fight Of The Year: Carmen Basilio KO 9 Johnny Saxton" … "Round Of The Year: Ray Robinson KO 4 Bobo Olson" … "Boxing Review 1956" by Dan Daniel listed a number of interesting facts: The largest purse of the year ($118,300) was garnered by Moore for the Patterson fight, the largest crowd was 60,000 in Mexico City for Raton Macias vs. Leo Espinosa, and the biggest gate ($233,456) was generated by the Robinson-Olson middleweight title fight held at Wrigley Field in Los Angeles … A readers poll voted Basilio the most popular fighter seen on TV in '56.



Date: May 1958

Cover: Ray Robinson, Carmen Basilio

What's So Important About This Issue? Despite frequent forecasts of his demise, Robinson was back on top after regaining the middleweight title in a rematch with Basilio. It was Sugar Ray's fifth term as 160-pound champion, a record that still stands today.

Cover Story: "Ray's Future Uncertain: Robinson's Retirement Predicted If Carmen Hangs Up Gloves" by Nat Fleischer. Besides describing the action, Fleischer predicted that neither man would ever fight again. THE RING Editor felt that the eye injury Basilio suffered was serious enough to force the former welter and middleweight champ to quit, and that Robinson would retire because without Basilio there were no huge paydays available. Fleischer was wrong on both counts. Basilio didn't retire until 1961, while Robinson kept plugging away until '65. There was also a two-page photo spread documenting the fight from the weigh-in to the moment Robinson's arm was raised in victory.

Also In This Issue: "[Jimmy] McLarnin: Depression Time Hero" by Ted Carroll … [Holly] Mims The Word" by Johnny Salak … "Desperation Fighters" by Al Buck … "Missing $20,000: Amazing Story Of How Frank Morgan Was Duped In A Bout With Jack Johnson" by Leon See, who managed Johnson at the time of the Morgan bout … Fighter of the Month: Sugar Ray Robinson.

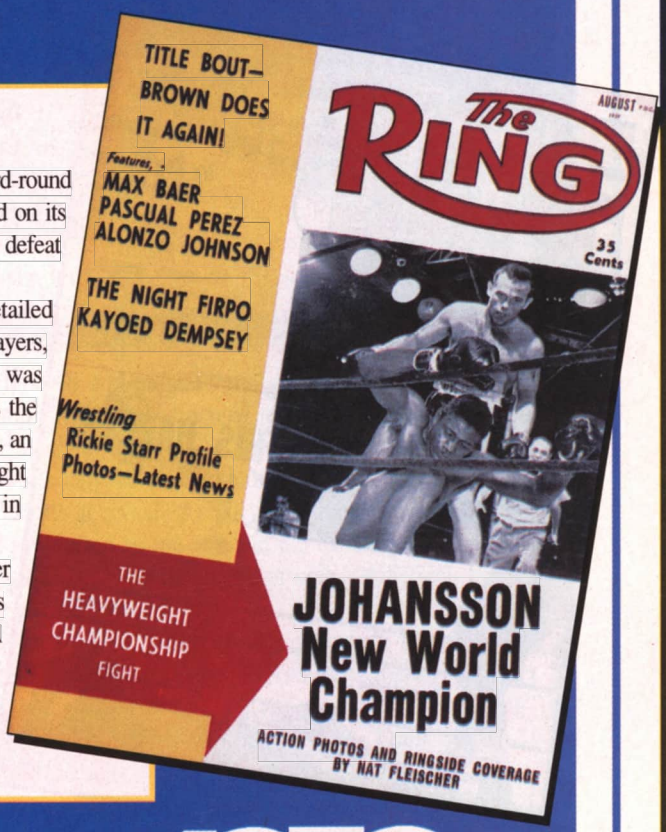
Date: August 1959

Cover: Ingemar Johansson, Floyd Patterson

What's So Important About This Issue? Swede Johansson's third-round knockout of Patterson was a gigantic upset that stood the boxing world on its head. The spectacular manner in which "Ingo" blasted Patterson into defeat with *seven* knockdowns also added to the fervor.

Cover Story: "New Era In Boxing" by Nat Fleischer gave a detailed description of the fight and the result's effect on the various industry players, including Patterson's cantankerous manager Cus D'Amato. Fleischer was also effusive in his praise of the new champ: "Right now Ingemar is the hottest thing in pugilism. Handsome, boyish looking, fearless, powerful, an excellent mixer who sells himself readily to the public, he has overnight become a national hero in his own land and the most popular man in America."

Also In This Issue: "Cuts Save [Joe] Brown's Title" by Nat Fleischer … "Mighty Mite: Pascual Perez, Flyweight Champ, Dominates Class With Brilliant Ring Record" by Murray Rose … "Alonzo Johnson: A Ranking Heavyweight" by Fred Eisestadt … "Last Laugh For Maxie Baer" by Ted Carroll … "Middle Muddles: Wrangle Over Ray Robinson's Status Recalls Division's Other Confusing Eras" by Jersey Jones … Fighter of the Month: Ingemar Johansson.



1950s

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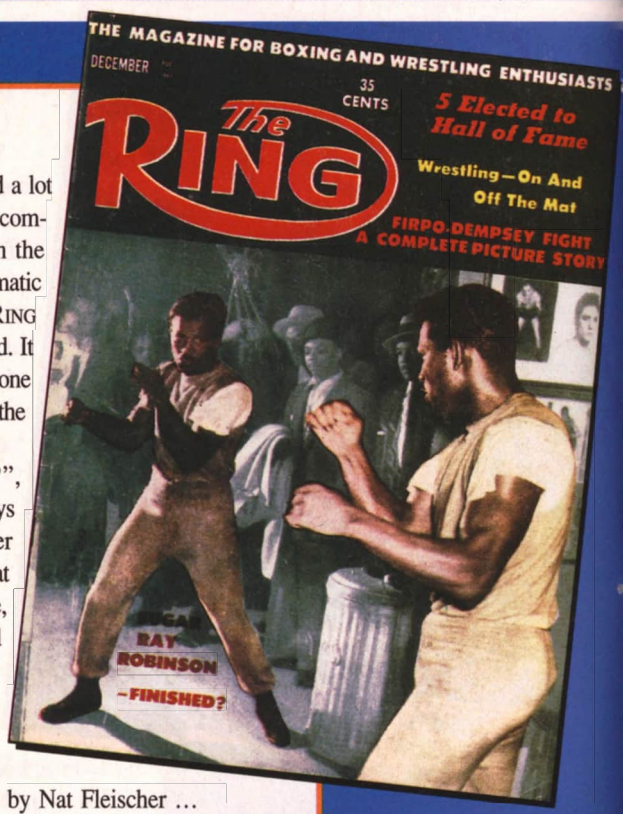


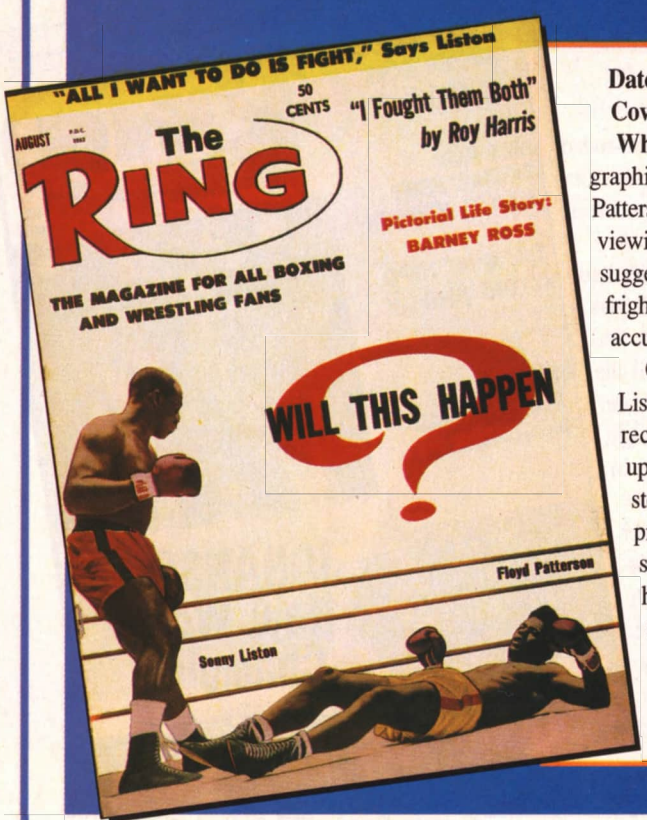
Date: December 1961

Cover: Sugar Ray Robinson

What's So Important About This Issue? He'd graced a lot of covers in the '40s and '50s (22 in those two decades combined, to be precise), but by the '60s, Robinson was on the slide—and this cover wasn't afraid to say it. With this dramatic photo of Sugar Ray shadowboxing in the mirror, THE RING wondered if the greatest fighter who ever lived was finished. It was a cover that marked the beginning of the end of an era, one that spanned from the early days of Joe Louis' title reign to the early days of Muhammad Ali's.

Cover Story: In his piece "Robinson Finished?", Managing Editor Nat Loubet suggested that Sugar Ray's days as a threat to win the middleweight title were over. After watching Robinson unimpressively outpoint Denny Moyer at Madison Square Garden, Loubet wrote, "At 41 years of age, the ex-middleweight champ was a last year's model, a faded silhouette of the perfect fighting machine of bygone days." Indeed, though Robinson would fight four more years, he would never again challenge for the middleweight crown, his loss to Gene Fullmer earlier in '61 being his last chance.

Also In This Issue: "[Benny] Paret Regains Throne" by Nat Fleischer … "[Tom] McNeeley Picks Self By KO" by Dan Daniel … Fighter of the Month: Benny Paret.



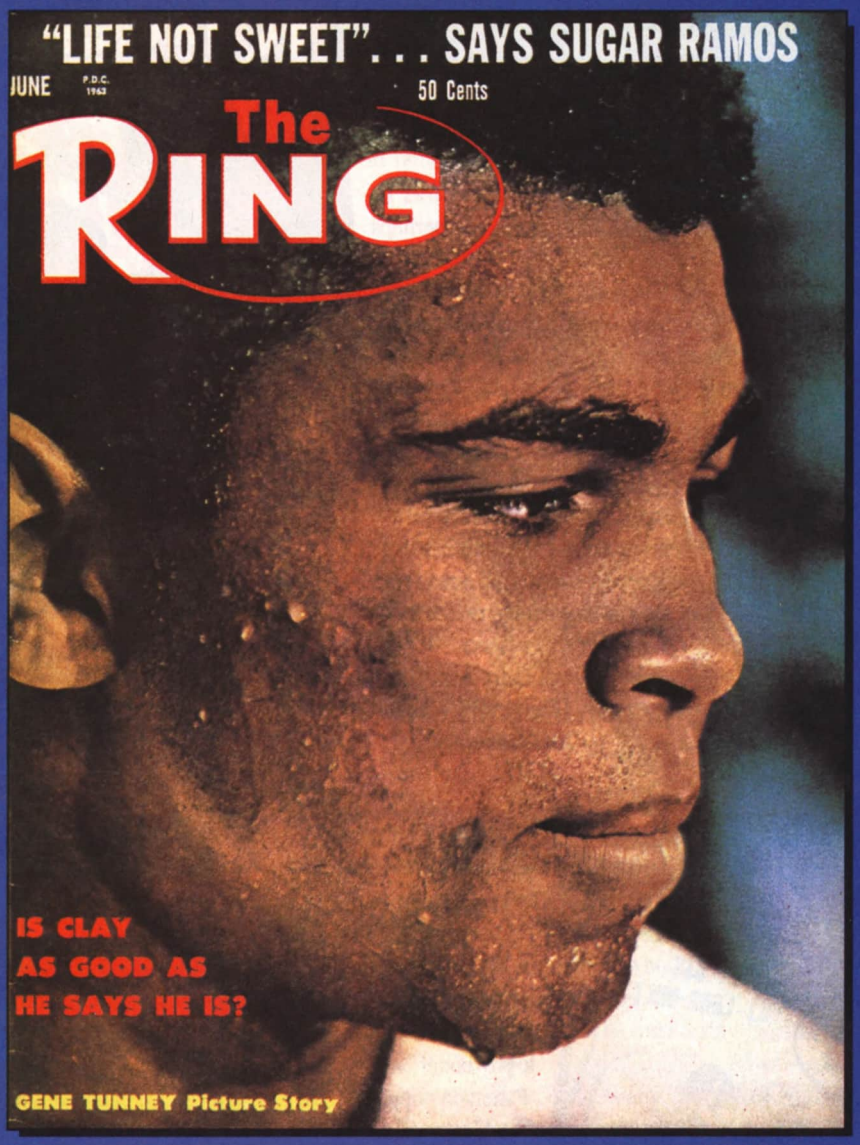
Date: August 1962

Cover: Sonny Liston, Floyd Patterson

What's So Important About This Issue? In the most prophetic graphic ever run on the cover, Liston is shown standing over a fallen Patterson, just as he would in actuality on September 25, 1962. In previewing the much-anticipated heavyweight title showdown, THE RING suggested what was on everyone's mind: that challenger Liston was a frightening favorite to take the title from Patterson via knockout. The accuracy of the cover image remains eerie to this day.

Cover Story: The only heavyweight who fought both Patterson and Liston, Roy Harris, wrote the story "I Fought Them Both," in which he recalled his losses to both men and drew conclusions about their upcoming championship fight. Harris lasted 12 rounds before being stopped by Patterson, but was blown out in one round by Liston, and predicted that Liston would stop Patterson, too—in about six or seven rounds. "I don't think Floyd's ammunition is strong enough to hold Sonny at bay very long," Harris wrote. "Sooner or later, Liston should catch him."

Also In This Issue: "The Middle Man" by referee Ruby Goldstein … "Fighting Man: Picture Story Of Barney Ross" … Fighter of the Month: Pone Kingpetch.



Date: June 1963

Cover: Muhammad Ali

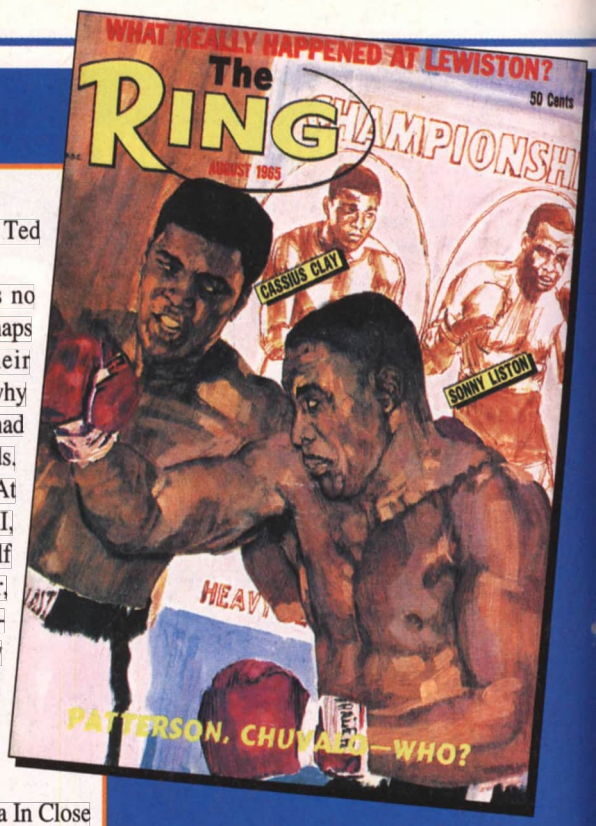
What's So Important About This Issue? It was the first solo cover for the most famous fighter in history. Ali (then Cassius Clay) was merely a contender on the rise at the time, rated number two by THE RING. But with his undefeated record, flashy style, and over-the-top personality, Ali was becoming one of the most talked-about athletes in the world.

Cover Story: The article advertised on the contents page as the cover story was in fact as much about Sonny Liston and Floyd Patterson as it was Ali, as indicated by the headline "Liston-Patterson Go Off To Vegas." Dan Daniel wrote about how a proposed bout between contenders Ali and Patterson collapsed when Patterson and champ Liston instead agreed to a rematch. He also wrote that after his victory over Doug Jones, Ali had become boxing's number-one attraction: "Clay's brash boasting, his efforts at so-called poetry, his living up to every rule and regulation in the old and almost forgotten book of Ballyhoo, built up an attraction which American boxing long had been hoping for."

Also In This Issue: "'Life Not Sweet': Featherweight King Writes Of Rise To Title And Past Glories Of Cuban Isle" by Sugar Ramos ... "Gene Tunney, 65 Years Young" ... "Mauro Mina, Peruvian Jaguar" by Frank Burns ... Fighter of the Month: Carlos Ortiz.

1960s

1960s



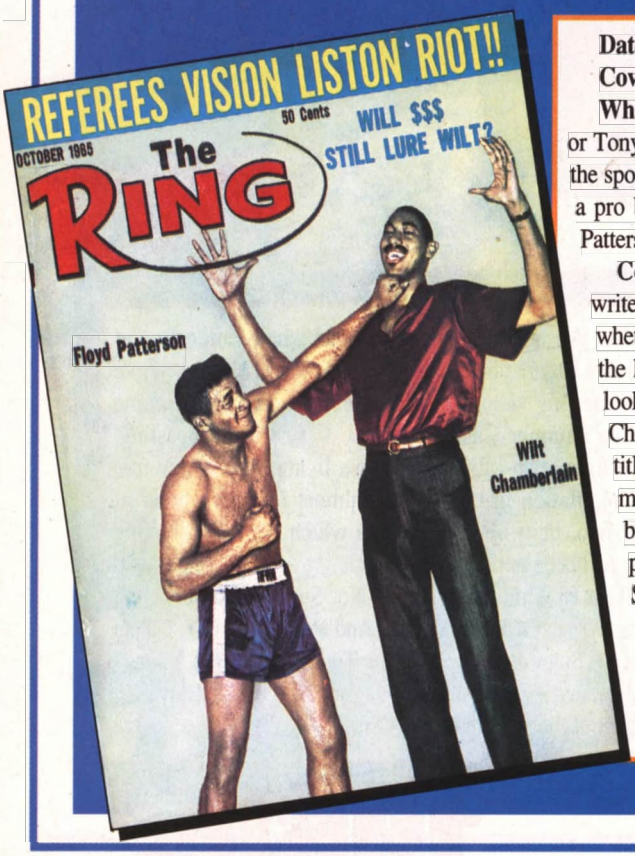
Date: August 1965

Cover: Muhammad Ali, Sonny Liston (illustration by Ted DeBosier)

What's So Important About This Issue? There was no more famous fight series in the '60s than Ali-Liston, and perhaps no more controversial bout in boxing history than their Lewiston, Maine, rematch. To this day, experts still debate why Liston failed to make it out of the first round, but the debate had only just begun when this issue of THE RING hit the newsstands.

Cover Story: In his story "What I Saw, What I Did At Lewiston," Editor Nat Fleischer gave his take on Ali-Liston II, which included an explanation of the role Fleischer himself played in the bout's unexpectedly quick conclusion. Fleischer, sitting next to the knockdown timekeeper, helped alert the referee to the fact that Liston had been down for approximately 20 seconds, leading the fight to be stopped after it had already started up again. This was just one of the many reasons Fleischer dubbed Ali-Liston II "The Battle Of Confusion."

Also In This Issue: "Real KO? Big Hoax? Only Liston Can Answer" by Dan Daniel … "Beaten By [Fighting] Harada In Close Fight, [Eder] Jofre Merits Return Shot" by Joe Y. Koizumi … Fighter of the Month: Muhammad Ali.



Date: October 1965

Cover: Floyd Patterson, Wilt Chamberlain

What's So Important About This Issue? Long before Mark Gastineau or Tonya Harding, one of the biggest (in more ways than one) superstars in the sports world, basketball legend Chamberlain, was toying with becoming a pro boxer. As gimmick covers go, this one of ex-heavyweight champ Patterson popping "Wilt The Stilt" on the chin ranks as an all-time classic.

Cover Story: In "Will Ring $ Still Lure Wilt From Basketball?", writer George Girsch wondered, as did millions of curious sports fans, whether the 7'1" Philadelphia 76ers center was really going to go from the hardwood to the ring. Patterson's manager, Cus D'Amato, was also looking to guide Chamberlain's boxing career, and told THE RING, "If Chamberlain applied himself, he could be boxing for the heavyweight title within a comparatively short time." At the time, a top boxer could make paydays far exceeding what Wilt could make playing basketball, but he nevertheless resisted the pull of pugilism, leaving this cover photo as the lasting image of his near-dalliance with the Sweet Science.

Also In This Issue: "Suppose Liston Had Come Off The Floor Fighting And KO'd Clay?" by Dan Daniel … "[Joe] Frazier Joins Pro $$ Chase" by Nat Loubet … "Jim Norris In A New Light" by Ted Carroll … Fighter of the Month: Flash Elorde.

Date: December 1966

Cover: Muhammad Ali (illustration by LeRoy Neiman)

What's So Important About This Issue? Not only did it feature the great Ali mere months before his exile would begin, but it was also the first contribution to THE RING of world famous artist Neiman.

Cover Story: Dan Daniel's "Clay vs. Terrell In New York Rests On Texas Reaction" discussed how Ali's heavyweight title defense against Ernie Terrell was being pursued by Madison Square Garden—which had at the time just been erected at its present location. First, however, the New York Commission was awaiting Ali's scheduled fight in Houston with Cleveland Williams before determining whether to license the controversial champion. Also in the issue was a second cover story of sorts: a piece by Nat Loubet welcoming cover artist Neiman. "I always wanted to do some work for THE RING magazine, and I am delighted that now I will be doing just that," Neiman told Loubet.

Also In This Issue: "Fistic Analysis Concedes Chance To 'Big Cat' [Terrell] In Title Encounter" by Ted Carroll … "[Oscar] Bonavena Beaten, [Joe] Frazier Goes After Clay's Victims" by George Girsch … "[Al] Hostak Toughest Foe, Says [Tony] Zale" by Dan Daniel … Fighter of the Month: Floyd Patterson.

Date: April 1967

Cover: Dick Tiger (illustration by Victor Mikus)

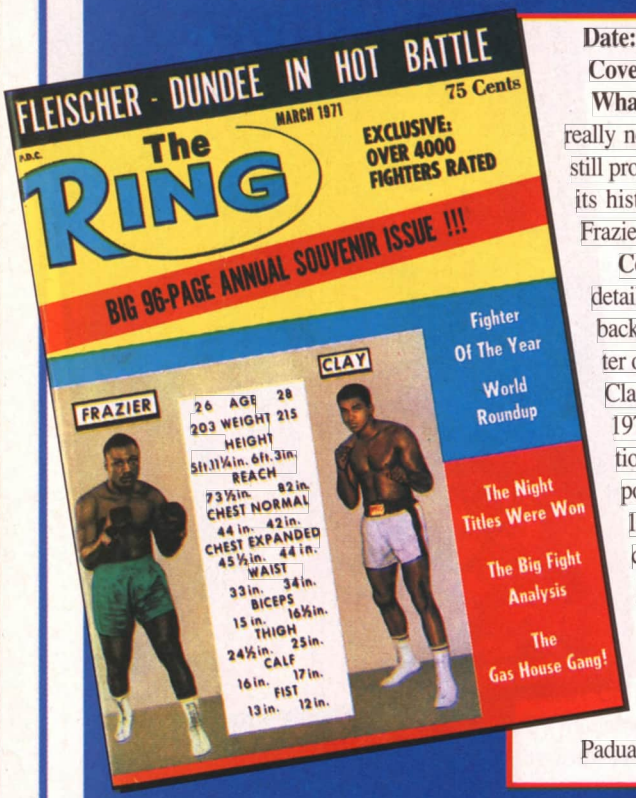
What's So Important About This Issue? One of the biggest non-heavyweight stars of the '60s, light heavyweight champ Tiger graced this cover with the memorably haunting headline, "Death Stalks The Tiger." The Nigerian legend was actually in excellent health at the time, as far as anyone knew, but he would go on to die of cancer just four years later at the age of 42. What exactly was meant by the use of the word "death" on the cover is a mystery.

Cover Story: In "They Stalk Tiger In Troubled Native Nigeria," writer George Girsch explained how the fighter's poorer countrymen were stalking him, jealous and upset about the money Tiger was making boxing in America. Former middleweight champ Tiger had just decisioned Jose Torres for the 175-pound title, a fight for which he earned, by THE RING's estimates, more money than 100 Nigerians could earn in a year.

Also In This Issue: "[Cassius] Clay Now Monarch Of All He Surveys" by Nat Fleischer … "[Emile] Griffith Outfought [Joey] Archer By 10 To 5; [Nino] Benvenuti Is Next" by Nat Loubet … "Who Can Beat [Vicente] Saldivar?" by Nat Fleischer … Fighter of the Month: Muhammad Ali.

1960s

1970s



Date: March 1971

Cover: Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier

What's So Important About This Issue? Though Ali and Frazier didn't really need any hype to build up their "Fight Of The Century," THE RING still provided its readers with a 96-page special breaking down the fight and its historical relevance. Their Madison Square Garden clash, in which Frazier would hand Ali his first defeat, lived up to every ounce of the hype.

Cover Stories: In previewing the Ali-Frazier fight, THE RING gave a detailed analysis of the fighters' contrasting styles, and also took a look back at other significant heavyweight championship fights. As a barometer of the turbulent times, Muhammad Ali was still referred to as Cassius Clay by many publications, including THE RING at times, in the early-1970s. Also, focusing in on Frazier, Dan Daniel wrote about the selection of "Smokin' Joe" as the 1970 Fighter of the Year. Frazier, Daniel pointed out, was selected based on two impressive knockouts inside of 18 minutes of action. Frazier stopped Jimmy Ellis in five rounds, then closed out '70 with a victory over light heavyweight champ Bob Foster. Frazier was selected ahead of middleweight champion Carlos Monzon, lightweight champ Ken Buchanan, and welterweight champ Billy Backus for the Fighter of the Year honor.

Also In This Issue: "Frazier-Clay Title Fight Set Up By Ali's KO Of Ringo" by Dan Daniel … "Buchanan A Wizard Against Paduano" by Nat Loubet.

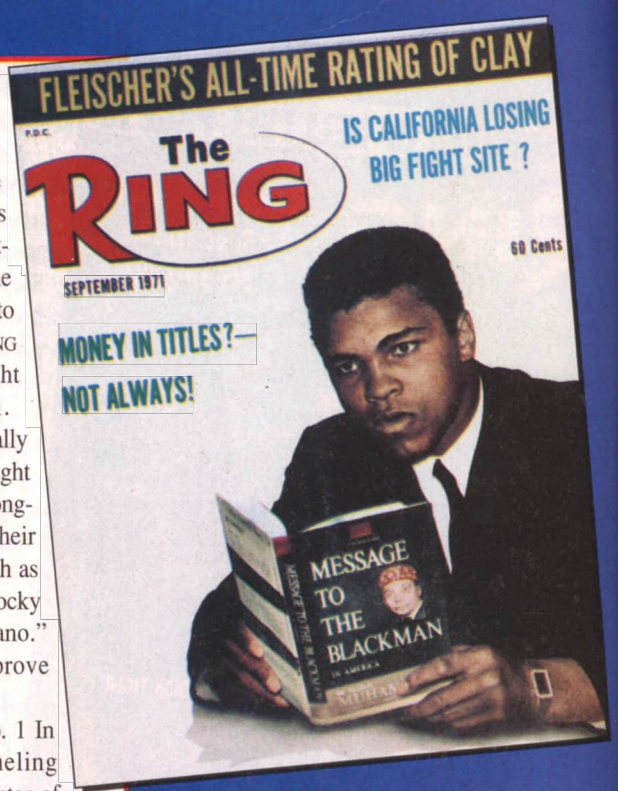
Date: September 1971

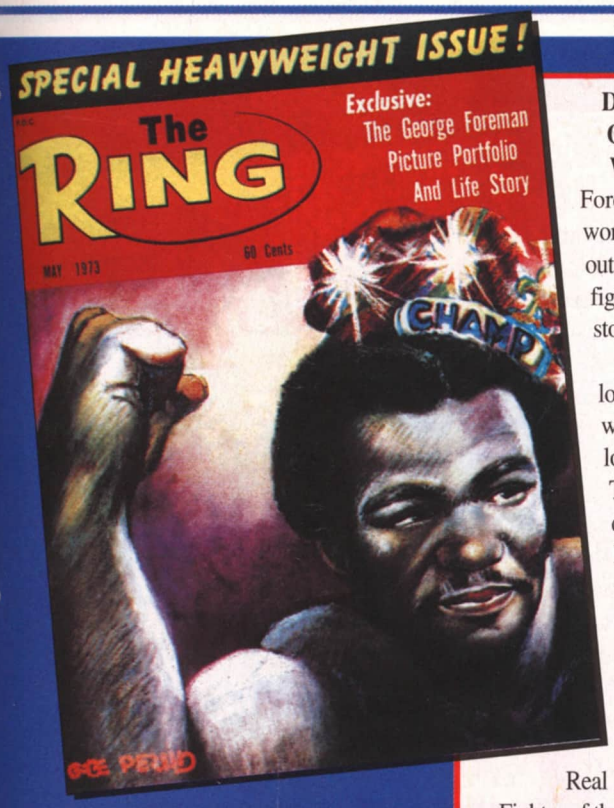
Cover: Muhammad Ali

What's So Important About This Issue? Ali's draft induction appeal ruling had recently been overturned by the United States Supreme Court in an 8-0 decision, and he was pictured here in a manner that emphasized his social and political relevance. While many boxing organizations, including the New York State Athletic Commission, rescinded Ali's right to hold the heavyweight title because of his draft status, THE RING had remained steadfast in recognizing Ali as heavyweight champion until "The Greatest" fell to Joe Frazier in March '71.

Cover Story: RING Editor Nat Fleischer wrote emphatically that Muhammad Ali was not among the all-time heavyweight top 10. Fleischer's perception of Ali's all-time status was strongly influenced by Frazier's 15-round decision over Ali in their first meeting. It would have been farcical to place Ali as high as number 10, Fleischer concluded, because Fleischer rated Rocky Marciano 10th, and Ali "never could have beaten Marciano." Over the next few years, the comebacking Ali would prove Fleischer's ranking very wrong indeed.

Also In This Issue: "[Bob] Foster's Knockout Mark No. 1 In Light Heavy List" by George Girsch … "Louis-Schmeling Meetings Were Matchless Dramas" by Jersey Jones … Fighter of the Month: Eddie Linder.





Date: May 1973

Cover: George Foreman (illustration by Gabe Perillo)

What's So Important About This Issue? It marked George Foreman's first solo cover as heavyweight champion of the world, a title he earned with his stunning second-round knockout of Joe Frazier. Many doubted "Big George" going into the fight because of his dubious list of opponents, but that didn't stop him from dramatically bouncing Frazier off the canvas.

Cover Story: George Girsch supplied a candid, in-depth look at the new heavyweight champ. At the time, Foreman was perceived as a brooding, sullen character, far from the lovable TV pitchman he's transformed himself into today. The story reached way back to Foreman's youth as a juvenile delinquent and high school dropout who stalked Houston's Fifth Ward, breaking windows and having constant run-ins with the law. But Foreman found an outlet in boxing, and long before he made himself a multimillionaire grill salesman, he became an Olympic gold medalist and then the world heavyweight champ.

Also In This Issue: A pictorial covering Foreman from his youth through the early-1970s … "Was That The Real [Jerry] Quarry?" by Nat Loubet … "Upsets" by Bill Gallo … Fighter of the Month: Venice Borkorsor.

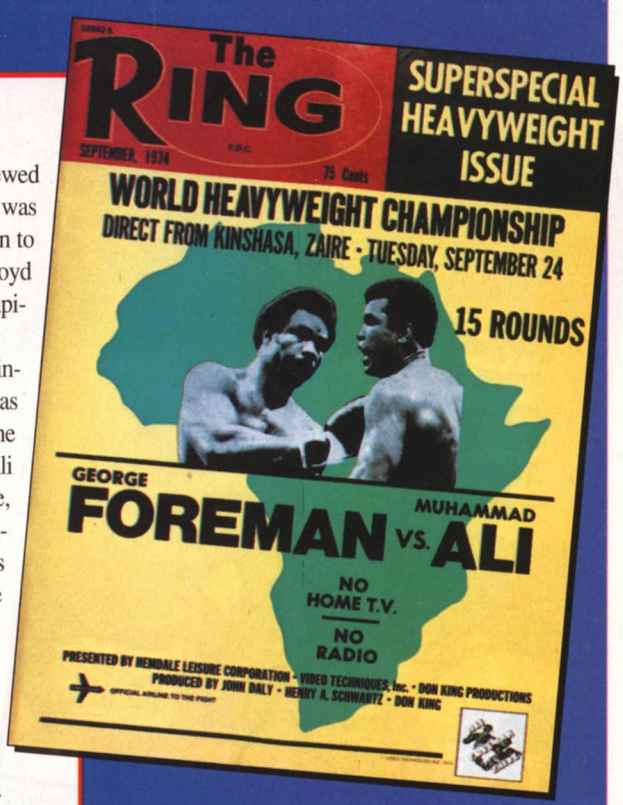
Date: September 1974

Cover: Muhammad Ali, George Foreman

What's So Important About This Issue? This issue previewed one of the most memorable heavyweight fights in a decade that was full of them, the Ali-Foreman clash in Kinshasa, Zaire. Ali went on to shock the world again with an eighth-round knockout, joining Floyd Patterson as only the two heavyweights to ever regain the championship.

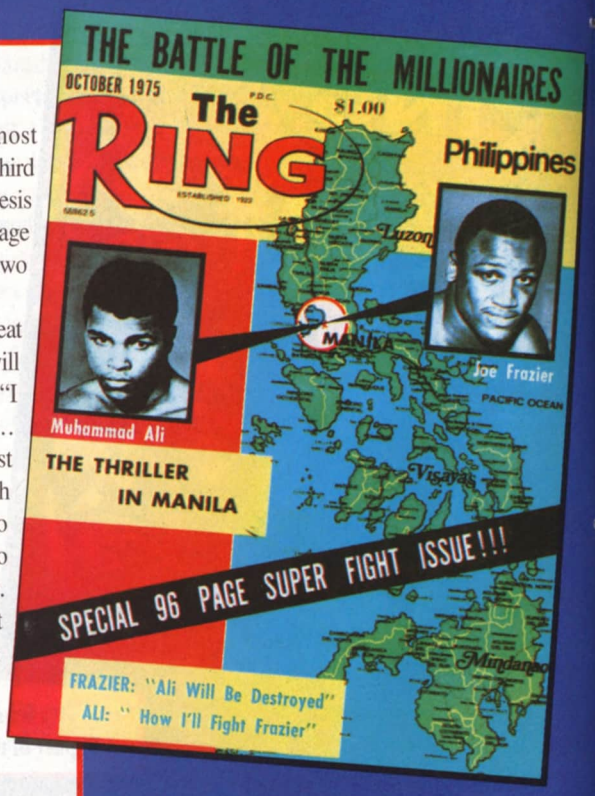
Cover Story: Foreman and Ali each contributed stories explaining why they would win "The Rumble In The Jungle." Foreman was counting on a short fight and wrote that he had no doubts about the outcome. "In a way, it is too bad," Foreman wrote. "Muhammad Ali has been good for boxing and I hate to see him go. But like all else, eras must end. He's had his run and now it's my turn." Ali countered by pointing out that "only five times in Foreman's career has he gone over five rounds. That doesn't give him much ring time and there have been questions about his ability to go 10 or 15 rounds against a major opponent."

Also In This Issue: "[Joe] Frazier Of Yore Gives [Jerry] Quarry Merciless Beating In Five-Round Carnage" by Nat Loubet … "New York Boxing In Jeopardy As Greatest Title Fight In History Is Set" by Dan Daniel … Fighter of the Month: Joe Frazier.



1970s

1970s



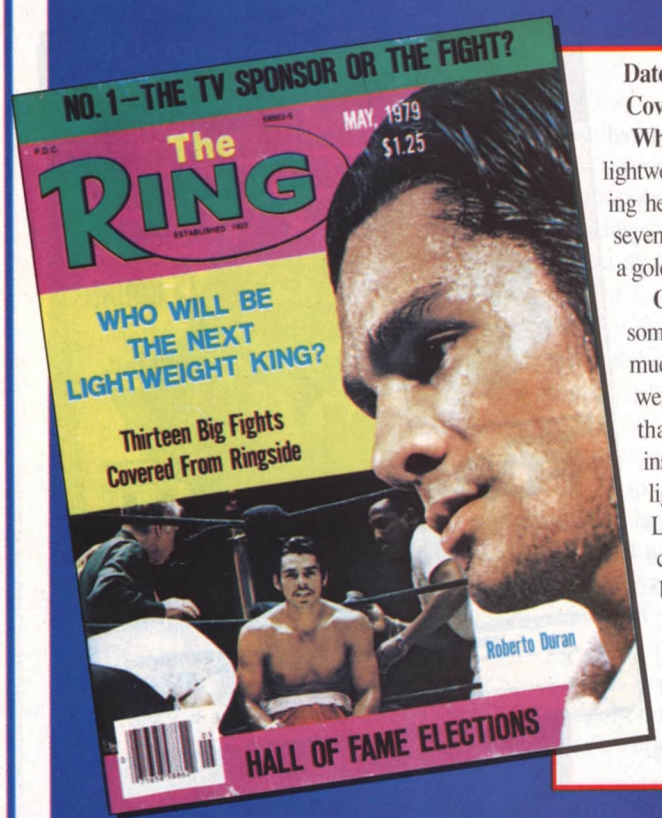
Date: October 1975

Cover: Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier

What's So Important About This Issue? The most famous trilogy in boxing history was concluding with this third meeting between heavyweight champion Ali and his nemesis Frazier. THE RING previewed the rubber match with a 96-page issue that included action shots spanning the careers of the two future Hall of Famers and articles by both.

Cover Story: Ali wrote that Frazier couldn't possibly beat him. "Joe Fraazz-iuh will be coming straight at me and I will be dancing, and punching, and dancing," wrote the champ. "I will hit him with so many punches he may even fall early … I also hope that he has learned to move a little from just going right at me. He's too easy to hit and I'm too fast with my hands." Frazier didn't pull any punches with regard to what he expected to do to Ali, whom Frazier still referred to as Clay. "Nothing is going to help him," Frazier wrote. "Clay is going to have to fight. I'll make him fight—fight for his life. He would like to con everyone. But I know him too well. I guess you can say we're not the best of friends."

Also In This Issue: "Zack Clayton, Zaire Referee, Logical Man For The Job" by Nigel Collins … Fighter of the Month: Jose Napoles.



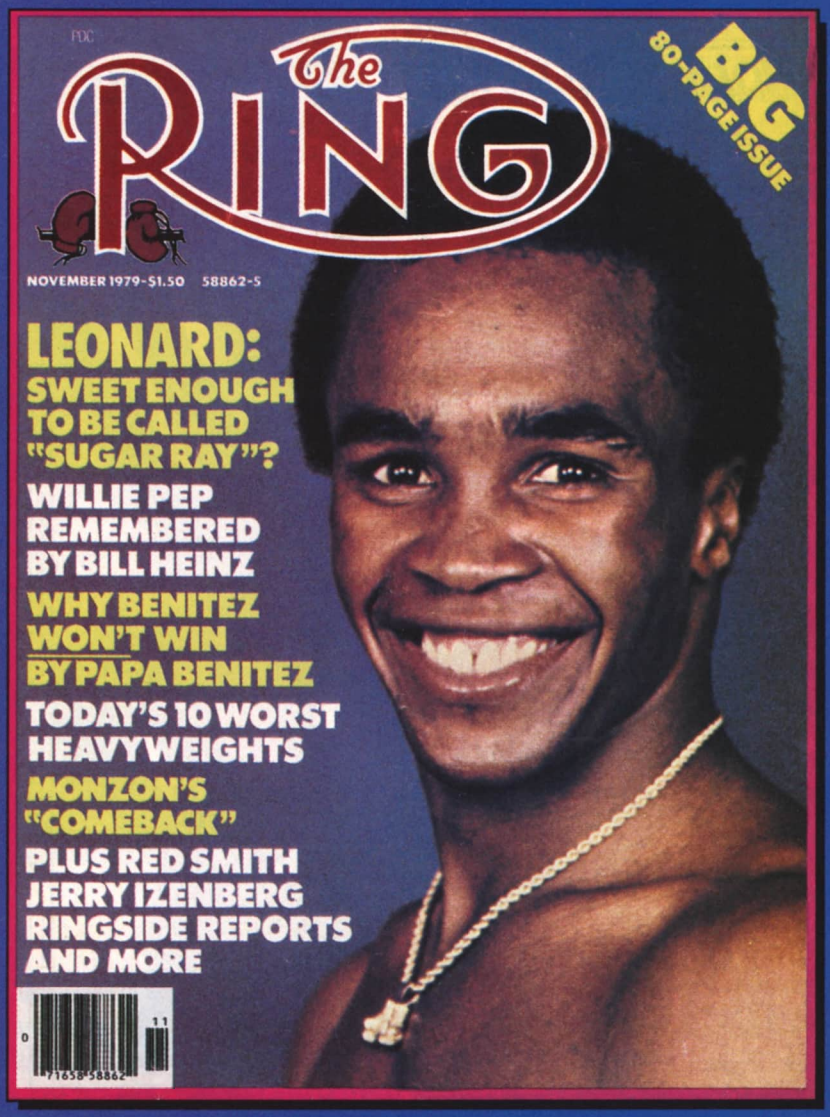
Date: May 1979

Cover: Roberto Duran

What's So Important About This Issue? Duran, arguably the best lightweight who ever fought, graced the cover of this issue, after deciding he couldn't make the 135-pound class anymore. The end of his seven-year title reign marked the end of an era—and the beginning of a golden age for the weight classes above.

Cover Story: With Duran vacating the lightweight title, there was some dispute as to who would inherit the 135-pound mantle, plus much debate over how Duran, 63-1 (50), would fare as a welterweight. Writer John Ort discussed both topics. Ort believed Duran, thanks to his dominant lightweight title reign, deserved to be instantly ranked among the top 10 welterweights in the world. The lightweight situation was a little more complex. Jim Watt, Johnny Lira, Alfredo Pitalua, and Vilomar Fernandez were among the contenders looking to secure the vacant lightweight title, and Ort broke down the strengths and weaknesses of each of them.

Also In This Issue: "[Ray] Leonard Stops [Fernand] Marcotte In Eight" by Robert Gillian … "[John] Tate Ices [Duane] Bobick In First" by Gordon Alexander … "[Marvin] Hagler Kayoes [Ray] Seales In First" by "Sailor" Don Sauer … Fighter of the Month: Shoji Oguma.



Date: November 1979

Cover: Sugar Ray Leonard

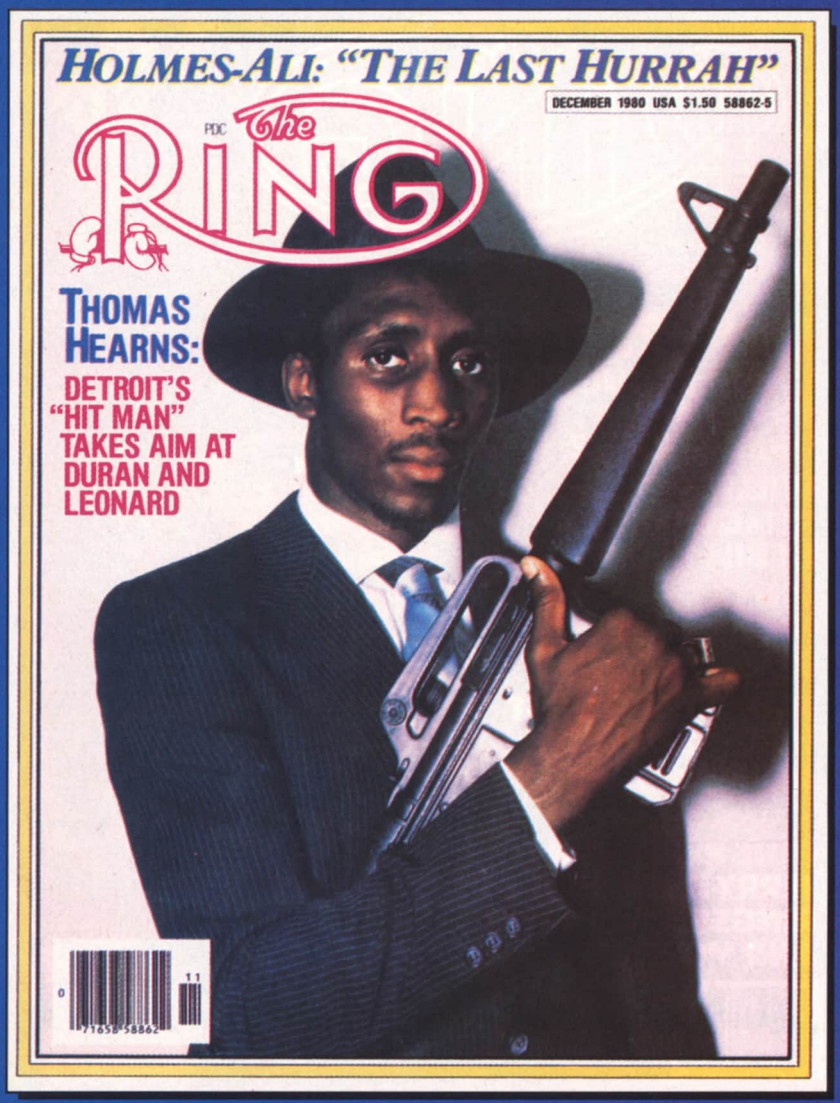
What's So Important About This Issue? Sugar Ray Leonard, who achieved rising-star status by winning gold at the 1976 Olympics, was becoming a superstar by the late-'70s. His debut appearance on the cover of THE RING—with his million-dollar smile on display—confirmed that he had arrived.

Cover Story: George Clifford produced a compelling cover story documenting Leonard's past and the impact he had on the community he came from. Leonard was 23-0 (14) at the time and skyrocketing toward mainstream fame. Everywhere the young fighter went, there was a maelstrom of attention that followed. Leonard had yet to win his first title belt, but he had already earned $2-million as a pro. Leonard's workouts were more like clinics. "You can hear Sugar Ray's fists," described Clifford. "'Thump. Thump. Thump, thump, thump, thump.' Then a voice yells '30 seconds,' and the fists go 'thump-thump-thump-thump-thump.' It is more than a workout. Sugar Ray is trying out tactics as surely as an actor tries out moves during a rehearsal." The great Sugar Ray Robinson was even quoted, saying of Ray Leonard, "He's putting it together well. He'll go a long way. He's not great yet—but I know one thing … he wins!"

Also In This Issue: "Willie Pep—Boxing's Running Legend" by Bill Heinz … "Tony Galento: The Last Round" by Jerry Izenberg … Fighter of the Month: Matthew Saad Muhammad.

1970s

1980s



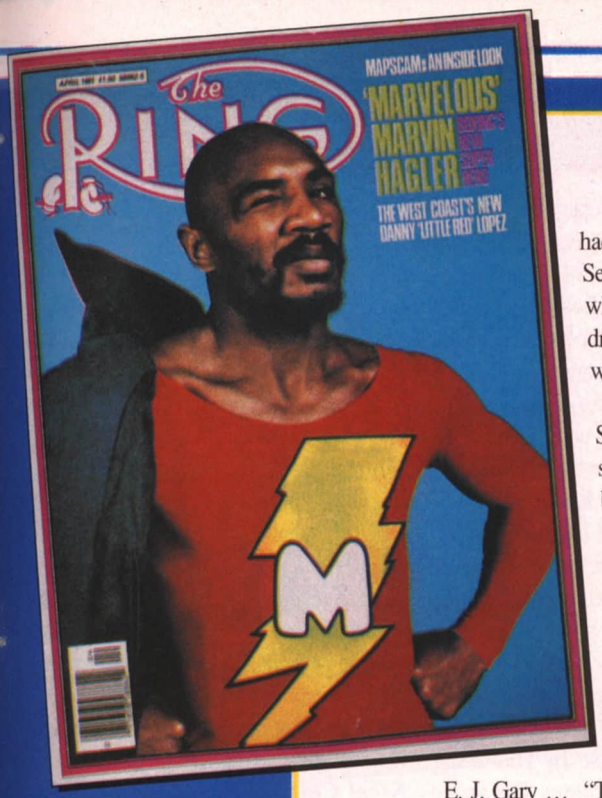
Date: December 1980

Cover: Thomas Hearns

What's So Important About This Issue? Besides the fact that it featured one of the decade's most popular fighters, the photo of Hearns wearing a fedora and a pinstripe suit and holding a machine gun has become one of the most famous covers in THE RING's lengthy history. The prop Hearns held in staff photographer Jack Goodman's photo was a toy version of an M-16 semiautomatic rifle purchased especially for the photo shoot at a Manhattan department store.

Cover Story: "Thomas Hearns: The 'Hit Man' Takes Out A Contract On Three Crowns" by Mike O'Hara was written shortly after Hearns' spectacular splattering of Pipino Cuevas to win the WBA welterweight title. The two fighters in his sights were Roberto Duran and Ray Leonard, both of whom Hearns eventually fought with mixed results. Accompanying the cover story was a cartoon by Charlie McGill that celebrated Hearns' emergence as a star.

Also In This Issue: "Holmes-Ali: The Night 'The Greatest' Was Anything But" by Bert Randolph Sugar ... "Duran-Leonard II: Duran And Leonard Tell How They'll Win," twin stories predicting different outcomes by rivals Roberto Duran and Ray Leonard ... "Mustafa Hamsho: Syrian-Bred, American-Based" by Joe Tintle ... "The Fighting Irish: Billy Conn And Art Rooney In A Verbal Donnybrook" by Jim O'Brian ... Fighter of the Month: Marvin Hagler.



Date: April 1981

Cover: Marvelous Marvin Hagler (photo by Jack Goodman)

What's So Important About This Issue? Even though Hagler had stopped Alan Minter to capture the middleweight title in late-September of the previous year, this was Hagler's first cover. And what a memorable cover it was, featuring the 160-pound champ dressed up in a superhero costume that was stitched together by the wife of editor Bert Sugar.

Cover Story: "Boxing's 'Captain Marvel' Bolts Onto The Scene As … Marvin Hagler, Champion" by Michael Katz presented an in-depth profile of the man who was on his way to becoming the most dominant middleweight since Carlos Monzon retired in 1977. In a fascinating sidebar, writer George Kimball described his trip to the U.K. with Hagler for his title-winning bout with Minter that was marred by racist fans who started a riot when Hagler won.

Also In This Issue: "Mapscam AKA Harold Smith … Putting All The Pieces Together" by Dave Anderson … "Will Boxing's New Investigation Do Justice To The Sport?" by Barney Nagler … "Where Are They Now? Billy Fox" by E. J. Gary … "The Philadelphia Story: Sportsdom's Newest City Of Champions Has Always Been Boxing's Championship City" by Mike Silver … Fighter of the Month: Eusebio Pedroza, who had just defended the WBA featherweight title against Patrick Ford.

Date: May 1983

Cover: Michael Spinks (photo by Will Hart)

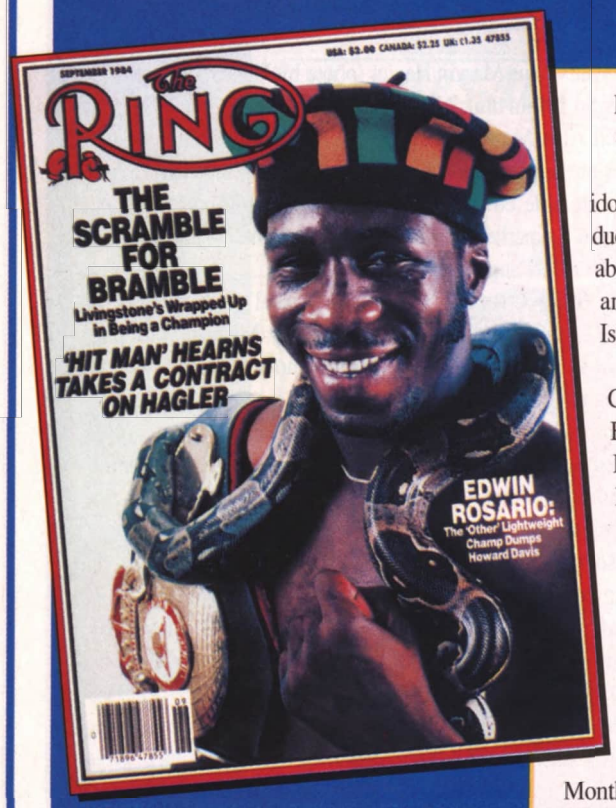
What's So Important About This Issue? By winning a 15-round decision over Dwight Muhammad Qawi, Spinks became the first undisputed light heavyweight champion since Bob Foster. This was also the first cover for the former U.S. Olympian. Although virtually nobody would have guessed it at the time, less than three years later Spinks would become the first light heavyweight to win the heavyweight championship.

Cover Story: "Michael Spinks Now Stands Tallest Among The Light Heavyweights" by Randy Gordon chronicles Spinks' road to the top of the 175-pound class and delves into his relationship with his troubled brother, Leon: "In trying to protect his brother from the sleaze that surrounded and engulfed him, Michael began to sacrifice his own career. Following his brother's ascension to the heavyweight throne, Michael—who had fought seven times in the previous 10 months—remained inactive for the next 10 months."

Also In This Issue: "[Marvin] Hagler On The WBC's Proposed Rule Changes" … "[Bob] Arum Tells Of $100,000 Payment To WBA Bagman" by Ben Sharov … "The 1930s: Send In The Clown, Plus a Trio Of Good Little Men" by Bert Randolph Sugar … "The One-Round School Of Boxing Journalism" by Nigel Collins … Fighter of the Month: Michael Spinks.

1980s

1980s



Date: September 1984

Cover: Livingstone Bramble

What's So Important About This Issue? Bramble had just upset TV idol Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini to take the WBA lightweight title, and, due to his eccentric behavior, had become one of the game's most talked-about personalities. Jack Goodman's cover shot, featuring both Bramble and his 5½-foot boa constrictor named Dog, played up the Virgin Islander's unorthodox persona and became an instant classic.

Cover Story: "Livingstone Bramble's Not Just A Wild And Crazy Guy" by Rob Lawin was an intriguing look at the man behind the image. Bramble had been cast as the bad guy in his bout with the All-American Mancini, but was actually a friendly, if somewhat offbeat, person who had lived a colorful life. A sidebar revealed the true identity of "Dr. Doo," who had been introduced during the prefight hype as a voodoo practitioner who had cast a spell on Mancini. Actually, he was Marvin Matthews, a high school history teacher from St. Croix who had coached an amateur basketball team Bramble played on in his youth.

Also In This Issue: "Hagler Showdown Looms After Hearns Decimates Duran" by Nigel Collins … [Eusebio] Pedroza Outgrows Featherweights, Challenges Two-Time Victim [Rocky] Lockridge" by Ben Sharov and Sanchez Valino … Fighter of the Month: Thomas Hearns.

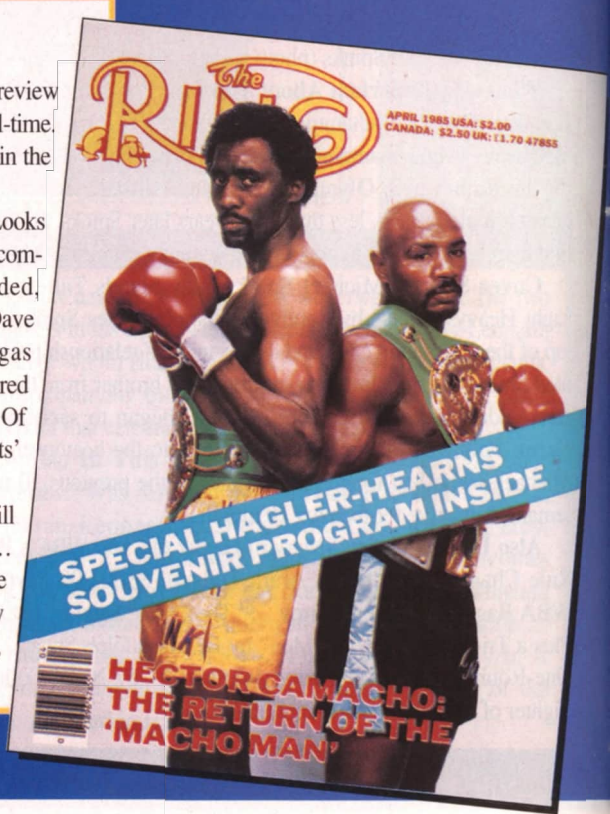
Date: April 1985

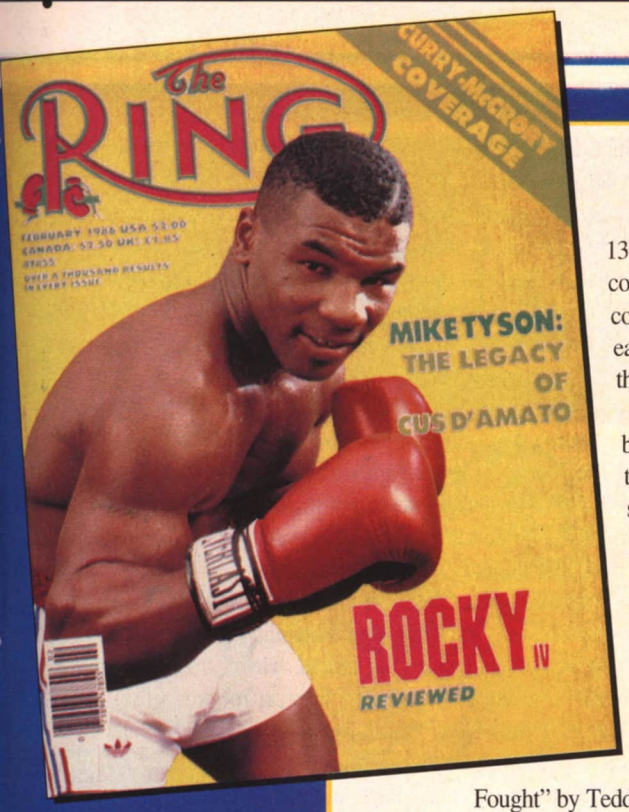
Cover: Thomas Hearns, Marvin Hagler

What's So Important About This Issue? This was the preview issue for what was to be one of the most exciting ring wars of all-time. Pete Goldfield's cover photo emphasized the radical differences in the middleweight rivals' heights and hairdos.

Cover Story: "Hagler-Hearns: RING Editor Nigel Collins Looks At The Big Fight" led off an 11-page section dedicated to the upcoming superfight. Other parts of the preview package included, "Training Camp Reports" by Robert Muldoon (Hagler) and Dave Hartoon (Hearns), "The Valley Of The Dollars: Las Vegas Bookmakers Expect A Minimum Of $10-Million To Be Wagered On The Hagler-Hearns Showdown" by Jack Welsh, plus "Tale Of The Tape" and both combatants' fight-by-fight records. An experts' poll selected Hagler as the winner by a vote of eight to four.

Also In This Issue: "The Return Of The Macho Man" by Phill Marder … "Giving The Brits A Break" by Joseph D. O'Brian … "The Amateur Boxer" by Bob Taylor … "In This Corner: Referee Rudy Ortega" by Christopher Coats … "Solid Goldman" by Herbert G. Goldman … Fighter of the Month: Donald Curry, who was coming off an impressive kayo of Colin Jones.





Date: February 1986

Cover: Mike Tyson

What's So Important About This Issue? Tyson was only 13 fights into his pro career when he was first featured on the cover. Will Hart took the photo of the youthful "Iron Mike" at co-manager Bill Cayton's Manhattan office. Even then it was easy to tell that the untested Tyson was going to be the biggest thing to hit boxing since Muhammad Ali.

Cover Story: "Mike Tyson: The Legacy Of Cus D'Amato" by Nigel Collins looked at the budding heavyweight phenom in the wake of D'Amato's death. The article also foreshadowed some of the problems that would beset Tyson in the coming years: "As a person, I'm just not happy. I'm not in a state where I hate the world and want to commit suicide. Far from it. It's just that although I'm somewhat successful, the people I enjoy the most, like Cus and my mother, aren't here. I know life goes on, but it's tough when you lose two important people."

Also In This Issue: "King Cobra: [Donald] Curry Destroys [Steve] McCrory With Second-Round Knockout To Unify Welterweight Title" by Jack Welsh … "Why I Fought" by Teddy Mann … "On Shaved Heads And Handshakes" by Joseph D. O'Brian … "Report From The Senior Circuit: 53-Year-Old Kenny Lane Chugs On" by Lindy Lindell … Fighter of the Month: Donald Curry.

Date: May 1987

Cover: Mike Tyson (photo by Will Hart)

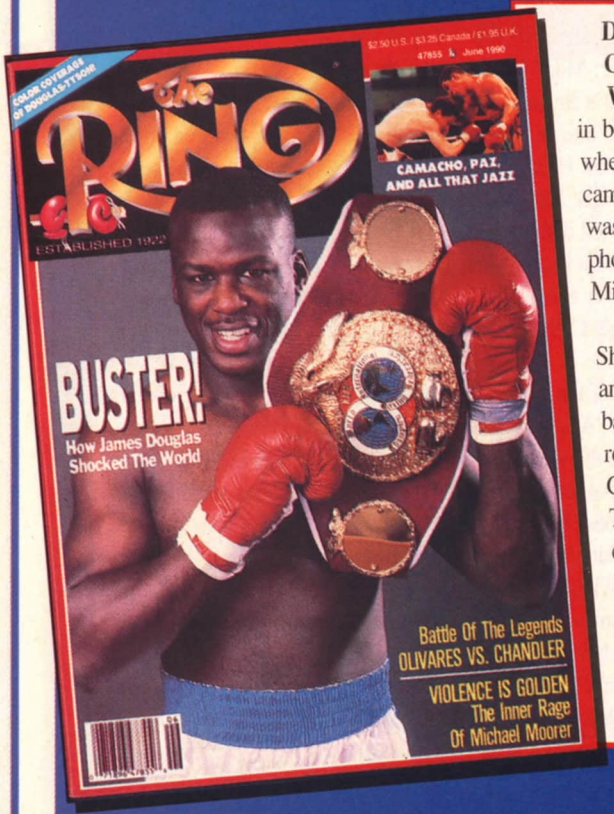
What's So Important About This Issue? Tyson won the first of his two RING Fighter of the Year awards for his accomplishments in 1986, a year in which he rattled off no less than 13 victories (11 via kayo) and won the WBC heavyweight belt by knocking out Trevor Berbick.

Cover Story: "Fighter Of The Year: Mike Tyson Dominates Boxing In '86" by Nigel Collins outlined the reason why Tyson was the obvious choice for the top honor: "Boxing historians will look back on 1986 in one of two ways: It will either be remembered as the year that began a glorious epoch, one ruled by a mighty man-child named Tyson, or as a year of deception, one in which a false messiah briefly flourished before falling beneath his burden."

Also In This Issue: Other award winners included Fight of the Year: Steve Cruz W 15 Barry McGuigan; Round of the Year: the 15th round of Cruz-McGuigan; Upset of the Year: Lloyd Honeyghan KO 6 Donald Curry; and Comeback of the Year: Marvin Johnson … "Crowning The Uncrowned" by Joseph D. O'Brian … "In This Corner: Matchmaker Bruce Trampler" by J. R. Jowett … Fighter of the Month: Louie Espinoza, who had recently stopped Tommy Valoyto win the vacant WBA super bantam belt.

1980s

1990s



Date: June 1990

Cover: Buster Douglas (photo by Bill Apter)

What's So Important About This Issue? It covered the greatest upset in boxing history—maybe in *sports* history. Douglas was a 42-1 underdog when he took on heavyweight champion Mike Tyson in Tokyo, and he came home one of the most famous athletes on the planet. Thankfully, he was still humble and cooperative enough to grant THE RING the exclusive photo shoot that included this cover pose of Buster displaying one of Iron Mike's former possessions.

Cover Story: Not only did the story "Buster! How James Douglas Shocked The World" by Steve Farhood and Joe Koizumi provide in-depth analysis of the earth-shaking upset, but it was accompanied by four sidebars: a rundown of the five greatest other upsets in heavyweight history, a round-by-round breakdown of the fight, an interview with contender George Foreman, and a one-on-one with the man of the hour, Douglas. The destruction of Tyson's aura of invincibility was a major point of discussion in Farhood and Koizumi's article. "How can a fighter be invincible when he's never been in a fight?" they provocatively asked.

Also In This Issue: "Violence Is Golden: The Inner Rage Of Michael Moorer" by Steve Farhood … "That's Entertainment!?! [Hector] Camacho, [Vinny] Paz, And All That Jazz" by Jeff Ryan ... New Faces: Joey Gamache … Fighter of the Month: Buster Douglas.

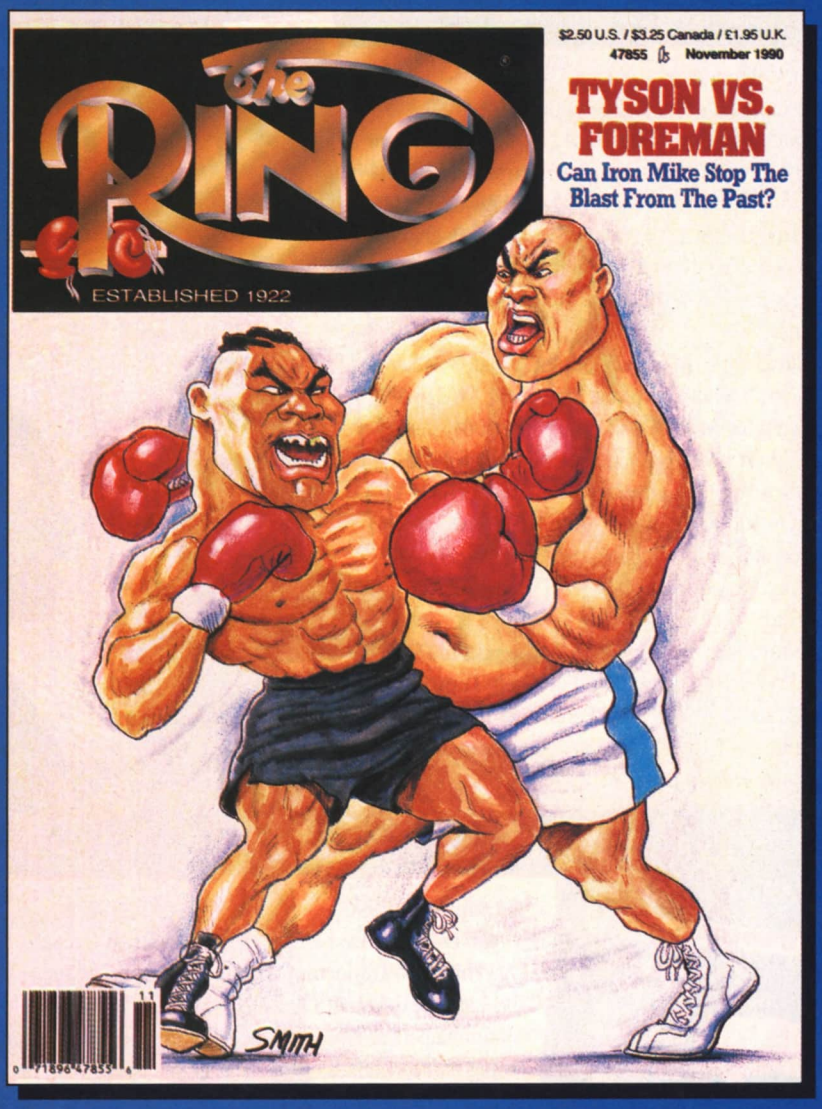
Date: August 1990

Cover: Julio Cesar Chavez (photo by Brent Cook)

What's So Important About This Issue? Below the heavyweight division, the first half of the '90s belonged to Chavez, as did the hearts of Mexican fight fans. The Latino boxing explosion we're seeing today might never have happened without Chavez, who reached superstardom with his last-second stoppage of Meldrick Taylor in March '90. The cover asked the question of whether Chavez, posed colorfully and proudly in Mexican garb, was the greatest fighter his native land had ever produced.

Cover Story: In "His Greatness Confirmed … Is Chavez The Best Mexican Fighter Ever?", Steve Farhood compared "J.C. Superstar" to Ruben Olivares, Carlos Zarate, Salvador Sanchez, Miguel Canto, and Vicente Saldivar, and concluded that Chavez, then 68-0, had already surpassed all the others. "By how much? About two seconds," Farhood wrote, referencing the time remaining on the clock when the Chavez-Taylor fight was halted.

Also In This Issue: "Matthew Saad Muhammad Reflects: 'If I Thought About What I've Lost, I Might Just Start Crying'" by Joe Tintle … "John L. Sullivan & Mike Tyson: Is History Repeating Itself?" by Todd Postol … "[Michael] Nunn The Less … And Less … And Less" by Jack Welsh … "Mark Breland: 'Damned If I Do, Damned If I Don't'" … Fighter of the Month: Julio Cesar Chavez.



Date: November 1990

Cover: Mike Tyson, George Foreman (illustration by Steve Smith)

What's So Important About This Issue? When it comes to superstars, they don't get much bigger than Tyson and Foreman, and talk of these two popular punchers clashing would continue off and on throughout the '90s (although the fight never became any more real than it appeared on this cartoon cover). This cover wasn't just noteworthy for the fame of the fighters depicted on it, however; it was also aesthetically striking enough to be named by *Magazine & Bookseller* as one of the "Best Newsstand Covers of 1990."

Cover Story: Robert Cassidy called them "the two most intimidating heavyweight champions in history" in his piece "Tyson vs. Foreman: Can Iron Mike Stop The Blast From The Past?" In truth, neither fighter was still at his absolute peak of intimidation by this time, but that didn't change the fact that this would have been a pay-per-view blockbuster for the ages. "What does it take to stop the schoolyard bully from picking on the mild-mannered bookworm? How about a bigger bully," wrote Cassidy, summing up why this potential battle of the bullies had the world buzzing.

Also In This Issue: "The Best Chins In Boxing" by Steve Farhood … "Where A Fighter Is King: Azumah Nelson In Ghana" by Arlene Schulman … Fighter of the Month: Aaron Davis.

1990s

1990s

Date: December 1993

Cover: Mike Tyson (photos by Roy London)

What's So Important About This Issue? Tyson going to jail for rape wasn't just a huge boxing story or even a huge sports story; it was a huge *news* story. And just because he was locked up in an Indiana prison, that wasn't going to keep the ex-champ off the cover of THE RING. Midway through his three-year stretch behind bars, Tyson's mug (if not his real mug shot) was still helping sell magazines.

Cover Story: Steve Farhood speculated on "What If Mike Tyson Had Never Gone To Jail?", writing about what 1992 and '93 could have brought for Iron Mike if not for the guilty verdict. Farhood had Tyson beating Evander Holyfield for the heavyweight title, then stopping Oliver McCall and Lennox Lewis before losing to Riddick Bowe in May '93. As we all know now, the Tyson that came out jail in '95 didn't excel at the top level the way the slightly younger Tyson of THE RING's imagination did.

Also In This Issue: "On Deck: Michael Moorer And Tommy Morrison, Power Hitters Waiting For Their Turns At Bat" by Eric Karabell … "Freddie Pendleton Fights Through The Heartbreak" by Nigel Collins … Fighter of the Month: Kennedy McKinney.

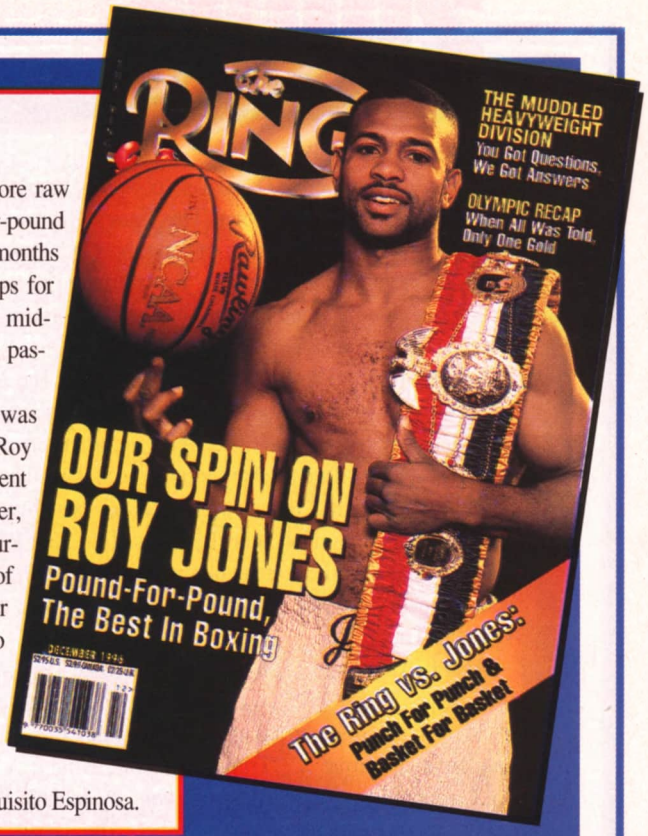
Date: April 1996

Cover: Oscar De La Hoya (photo by Brent Cook)

What's So Important About This Issue? If Julio Cesar Chavez started the Latino explosion, De La Hoya took it to the next level, and his ascension to superstardom really began with his 1995 campaign that led to him being named Fighter of the Year in this issue. With his blend of heartthrob looks and Hall of Fame talent, "The Golden Boy" would go on to become by far the most popular (and well-paid) non-heavyweight of his generation.

Cover Story: "My image changes in the ring" De La Hoya told Steve Farhood for the Fighter of the Year story, explaining how he can be a pretty boy and a fearsome fighter at the same time. Already the former, De La Hoya proved he was the latter in '95 by disposing of John-John Molina, Rafael Ruelas, Genaro Hernandez, and Jesse James Leija. Other year-end awards for '95: Fight of the Year: Saman Sorjaturong KO 7 Chiquita Gonzalez; Knockout of the Year: Julio Cesar Vasquez KO 11 Carl Daniels; Upset of the Year: Willy Salazar KO 7 Danny Romero; Round of the Year: the seventh frame of Sorjaturong-Gonzalez.

Also In This Issue: "The Future Of Mike Tyson: The Five Questions That Must Be Answered" by Nigel Collins … "As Emile Griffith And Ray Mancini Know: Gabe Ruelas' Pain Will Never Go Away" by Robert Cassidy … Fighter of the Month: Azumah Nelson.



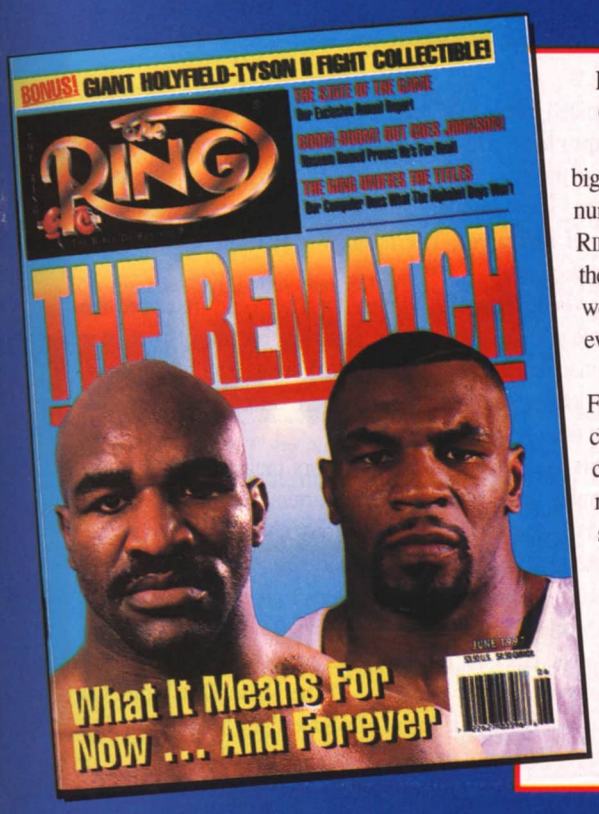
Date: December 1996

Cover: Roy Jones

What's So Important About This Issue? Nobody brought more raw athleticism into the ring in the '90s than Roy Jones, the pound-for-pound champ at the time and a semi-pro basketball player on the side. Just months before this magazine came out, Jones made waves by playing hoops for the Jacksonville Barracudas the same day he defended his super middleweight belt against Eric Lucas, and he brought his two sporting passions together on this classic cover.

Cover Story: While Chris Cassidy took the cover photo, it was brother Robert Cassidy who penned the unique story "THE RING vs. Roy Jones: Punch For Punch & Basket For Basket." Cassidy and Jones went head-to-head in a game of basketball (Jones prevailed in a squeaker, 13-11) and then laced up the gloves and sparred for a round. Not surprisingly, Jones dominated the round, even while pulling nearly all of his punches. "He was so secure in his own athletic ability, he never had to embarrass me," Cassidy wrote. "He never felt the need to demonstrate his superiority; he simply had fun, and so did I."

Also In This Issue: "Olympic Recap: When All Was Told, Only One Gold" by Steve Farhood … "The Perils Of Puerto Rico: How [Felix] Trinidad And [Wilfredo] Vazquez Can Avoid The Fate Of The Greats" by Roberto Santiago … Fighter of the Month: Luisito Espinosa.



Date: June 1997

Cover: Evander Holyfield, Mike Tyson (photos by Jason Ross Lavin)

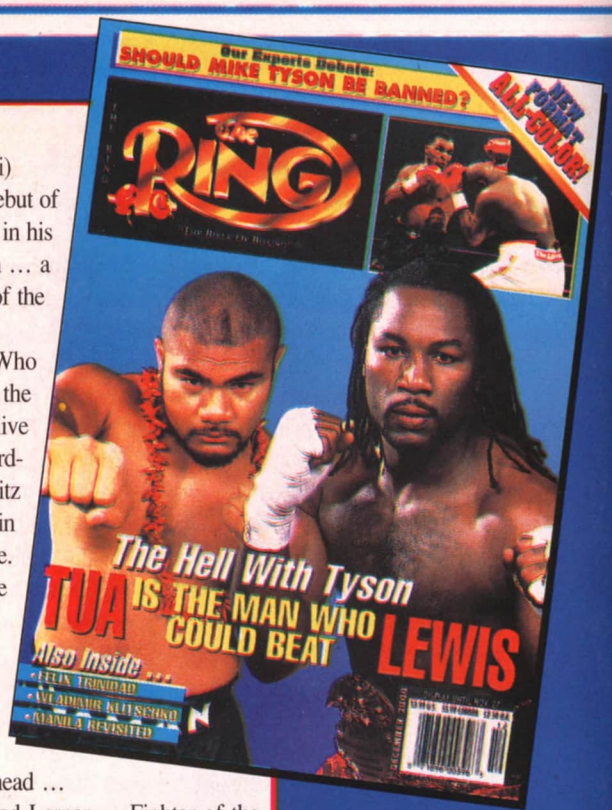
What's So Important About This Issue? Fights don't get much bigger than the Holyfield-Tyson rematch, which sold a then-record number of pay-per-views and propelled this preview issue of THE RING to phenomenal sales figures. Their first fight was an upset for the ages, making their second go-round the kind of mega-event the world just couldn't wait to sink its teeth into. It was so big, we didn't even need the fighters' names on the cover.

Cover Story: In "The Rematch: What It Means Now … And Forever," Greg Logan broke down Holyfield-Tyson II from every conceivable angle (or so we thought, until reality pretty much defied conceivability), focusing on what the future would hold for both men depending on the various possible outcomes. There was also a special pull-out supplement inside the magazine, featuring a giant 21" x 31" poster hyping the rematch.

Also In This Issue: "Our Exclusive Annual Report: The State Of The Game" by Steve Farhood … "Boom-Boom! Out Goes [Tom] Johnson! Naseem Hamed Proves He's For Real!" by Brian Doogan … "THE RING Unifies The Titles: Our Computer Does What The Alphabet Boys Won't" by Jim Trunzo … Fighter of the Month: Naseem Hamed.

1990s

2000s



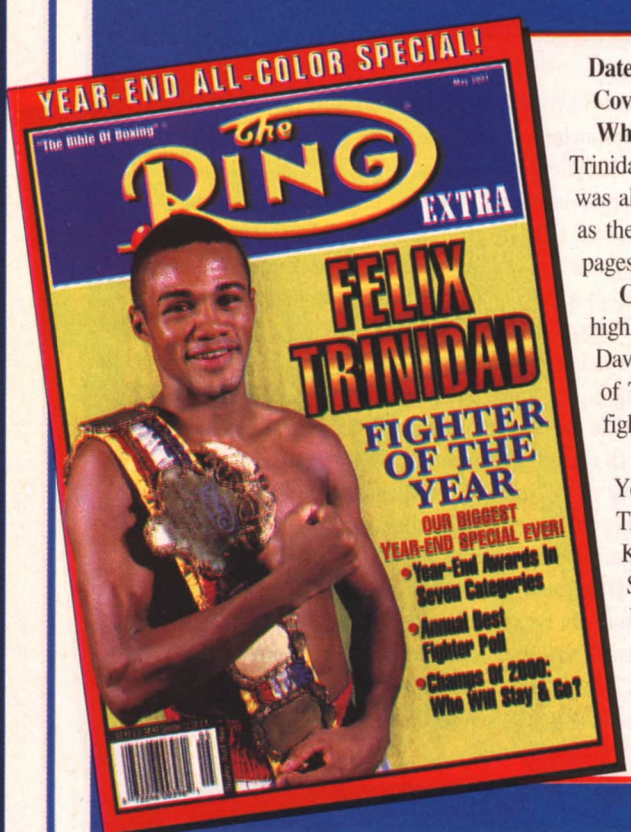
Date: December 2000

Cover: Lennox Lewis, David Tua (photos by Frank Vitucci)

What's So Important About This Issue? This was the debut of the all-color RING, and as Editor-in-Chief Nigel Collins wrote in his "Ringside" column, the issue was "the realization of a dream … a beautiful new format, one that will bring the colorful world of the Sweet Science to life as never before."

Cover Story: "The Hell With Tyson: Tua's The Man Who Could Give Lewis The Hook" by Nigel Collins scrutinized the upcoming heavyweight title fight, which unfortunately didn't live up to expectations. Two sidebars accompanied the article: "Hard-Hitting Homecoming," which covered Lewis' second-round blitz of Frans Botha in London, and "Lewis vs. Tua: Staff Picks," in which all five in-house experts picked Lewis to retain the title. None of them, however, predicted the one-sided bore that the bout turned out to be.

Also In This Issue: "Is It Time To Ban Mike Tyson?" featured Senior Writer William Dettloff and West Coast correspondent Ivan Goldman taking opposite sides in a punch-counterpunch format … "Trinidad Burning Bright: A Red Hot Champion In A White Hot Division" by Johnnie Whitehead … "25 Years Later Manila Still Remembers The Thrilla" by Ted Lerner … Fighter of the Month: Ener Julio, who had upset previously unbeaten knockout artist Randall Bailey.



Date: May 2001

Cover: Felix Trinidad (photo by Chris Farina)

What's So Important About This Issue? By the end of 2000, Trinidad had become the most popular Puerto Rican fighter of all-time. It was also in '00 that "Tito" enjoyed what will probably be remembered as the finest year of his career. The issue was also the biggest (108 pages) year-end special ever.

Cover Story: "Felix Trinidad: Fighter Of The Year" recapped the highlights of Trinidad's sensational year, including his trio of wins over David Reid, Mamadou Thiam, and Fernando Vargas. The fact that two of Tito's three victims, Reid and Vargas, were undefeated, top-notch fighters weighed heavily in Trinidad's favor.

Also In This Issue: Other award winners included Fight of the Year: Erik Morales W 12 Marco Antonio Barrera; Round of the Year: The fifth round of Morales-Barrera; Knockout of the Year: Ben Tackie KO 10 Roberto Garcia; Upset of the Year: Jose Luis Castillo W 12 Stevie Johnston; Comeback of the Year: Virgil Hill; Event of the Year: Shane Mosley W 12 Oscar De La Hoya … "Will Barrera Hand [Naseem] Hamed His First Defeat? 20 Experts Have Their Say" (12 went for Hamed, eight for Barrera) … "The Noise That Won't Go Away: Just Give Bernard Hopkins His Superfight Already" by Ted Bodenrader … Fighter of the Month: Felix Trinidad.

Date: February 2002

Cover: Bernard Hopkins (photo by Bruce MacNabb)

What's So Important About This Issue? After 13 years as a pro, boxing's ultimate maverick showed the world that he was every bit as good as he always claimed, knocking out Felix Trinidad to win the undisputed middleweight championship. Hopkins' long-awaited season in the sun had finally arrived.

Cover Story: "The Inside Story: How I Shocked The World" by Bernard Hopkins was a first-person account of his journey from the penitentiary to the pinnacle of his profession. But mainly he focused on the lead-up to the fight—including the riot he started in San Juan by throwing the Puerto Rican flag on the ground—and the fight itself: "I still had two minutes left in the [12th] round, and if Tito's father hadn't come in the ring and stopped the fight, I would have punished him. I could have gone 20 rounds, easy."

Also In This Issue: "Mexican Makeover: Born Again As A Boxer, Barrera's Better Than Ever" by William Dettloff … [Fernando] Vargas Gives The Fans What They Want, But Is He Too Ferocious For His Own Good?" by Jeff Ryan … "From Draft-Dodgers To Patriots: How Boxing Responds To National Crisis" by Pete Ehrmann … Fighter of the Month: Bernard Hopkins.

Date: November 2002

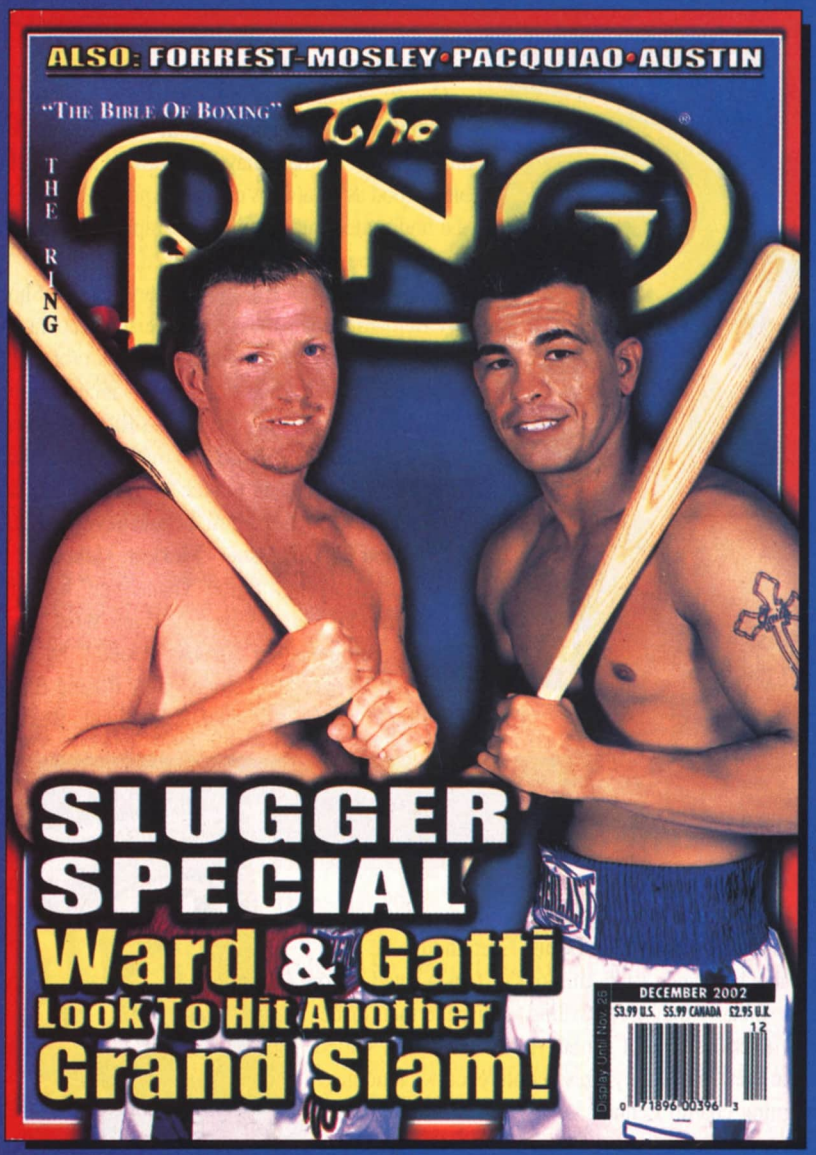
Cover: Mike Tyson (photo by Al Bello)

What's So Important About This Issue? Even though he hadn't held even an alphabet belt since 1996, millions of fans wanted Tyson back on the throne so badly they were willing to suspend their disbelief and indulge in a serious case of denial. And when Tyson started a free-for-all at the New York City press conference to announce his fight with reigning champ Lennox Lewis, it pushed interest in the match to unprecedented levels (the pay-per-view eventually generated approximately $103-million in revenue). This issue dealt with the fight and its aftermath.

Cover Story: "Monster Mashed! Can A New Tyson Emerge From The Rubble?" by Nigel Collins detailed what happened in the ring in Memphis the night of June 8 and speculated on whether the defeated and surprisingly contrite Tyson could rebuild his career and personal life in the wake of such an emphatic loss.

Also In This Issue: "THE RING 100: Ranking The Best Fighters In the World" … "Onward Christian Soldier: [Evander] Holyfield Wins Believers With Upset Of [Hasim] Rahman" by Eric Raskin … "Inside The King's Court: THE RING Spends A Day With DK" by Joe Santoliquito … "The Junior Welterweight Division: It's The Best In Boxing … Tell Your Friends" by William Dettloff … Fighter of the Month: Lennox Lewis.

2000s



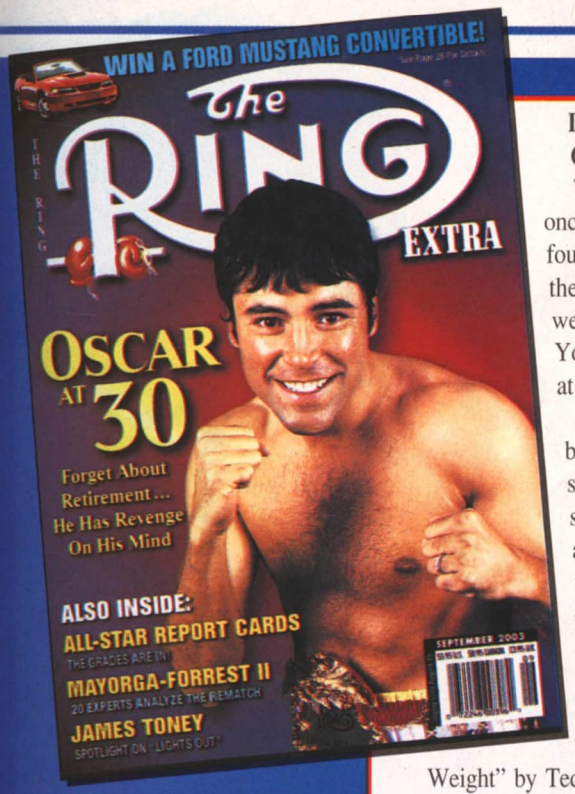
Date: December 2002

Cover: Arturo Gatti, Micky Ward

What's So Important About This Issue? When it comes to thrill-a-minute sluggers, few in recent years have rivaled Gatti and Ward, which is why photographer Tom Casino was inspired to pose the two junior welterweights holding baseball bats. This unique cover made an extra-large splash when the two bats, signed by both fighters, were sold on eBay with the proceeds going to charity.

Cover Story: The first Gatti-Ward fight, won by Ward in May '02, was so thrilling, HBO had no choice but to make a rematch between the two junior welterweights. RING Editor-in-Chief Nigel Collins previewed the second battle and honed right in on the core of what Gatti-Ward meant to boxing fans, opening by writing: "If you could cook down the essence of the first Micky Ward-Arturo Gatti fight and load it into a syringe, you'd have the drug that hooks people on boxing. It was a shot of mayhem so pure that it left fight junkies euphoric and begging for another dose." Fight fans got another rush when Gatti won the November '02 rematch, and Gatti would go on to prevail in the spectacular June '03 rubber match as well.

Also In This Issue: "Summer Bummer" by William Dettloff … "Pac-Man Fever" by Ted Lerner … Fighter of the Month: Antonio Tarver.



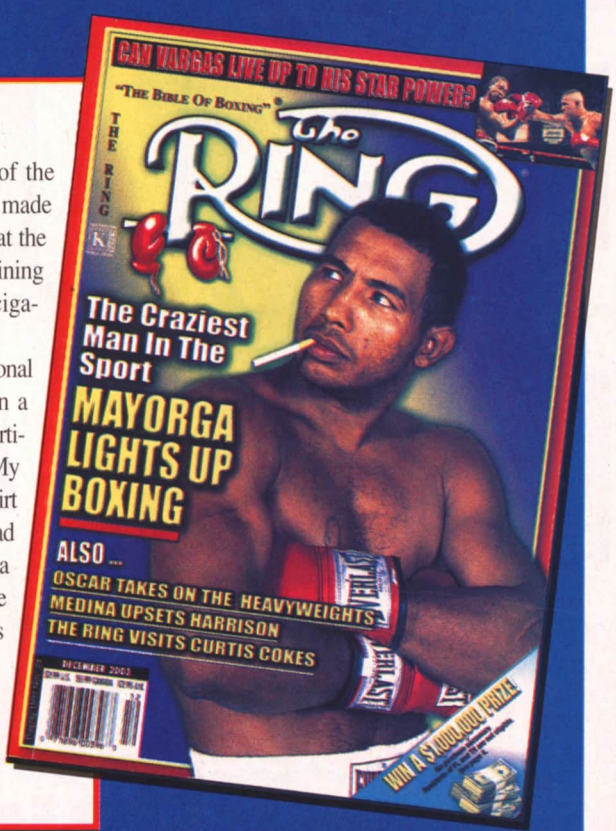
Date: September 2003

Cover: Oscar De La Hoya (photo by Jan Sanders)

What's So Important About This Issue? De La Hoya had once said he'd be retired by age 30, but here he was entering his fourth decade, still fighting, and leaving THE RING to wonder what the future held for boxing's biggest earner outside the heavyweight division. As the whopping sales for his mismatch with Yory Boy Campas indicated, De La Hoya's drawing power was at an all-time high.

Cover Story: Movie star looks, a gorgeous wife, and a hefty bank account were the reasons why De La Hoya wore a beaming smile on his face in the fall of 2003, wrote Joe Santoliquito. But something out there was nagging "The Golden Boy": defeats against Felix Trinidad and Shane Mosley. "If I was undefeated today, I would definitely be retired from boxing already," De La Hoya declared in the story. "I have to get those two losses avenged." It didn't exactly work out the way De La Hoya wanted. In his next fight, The Golden Boy lost again to Mosley, via controversial 12-round decision.

Also In This Issue: "James Toney Makes It Worth The Weight" by Ted Bodenrader … "Was [Ricardo] Mayorga-[Vernon] Forrest A Fluke? 20 Experts Analyze The Rematch" … Fighter of the Month: James Toney.



Date: December 2003

Cover: Ricardo Mayorga (photo by Duane Long)

What's So Important About This Issue? The novelty of the eccentric Nicaraguan posing with a cigarette between his lips made this cover special. Mayorga, the world welterweight champion at the time, had a real zest for life, sometimes at the expense of training properly. His notorious training regimen included smoking cigarettes and drinking beer.

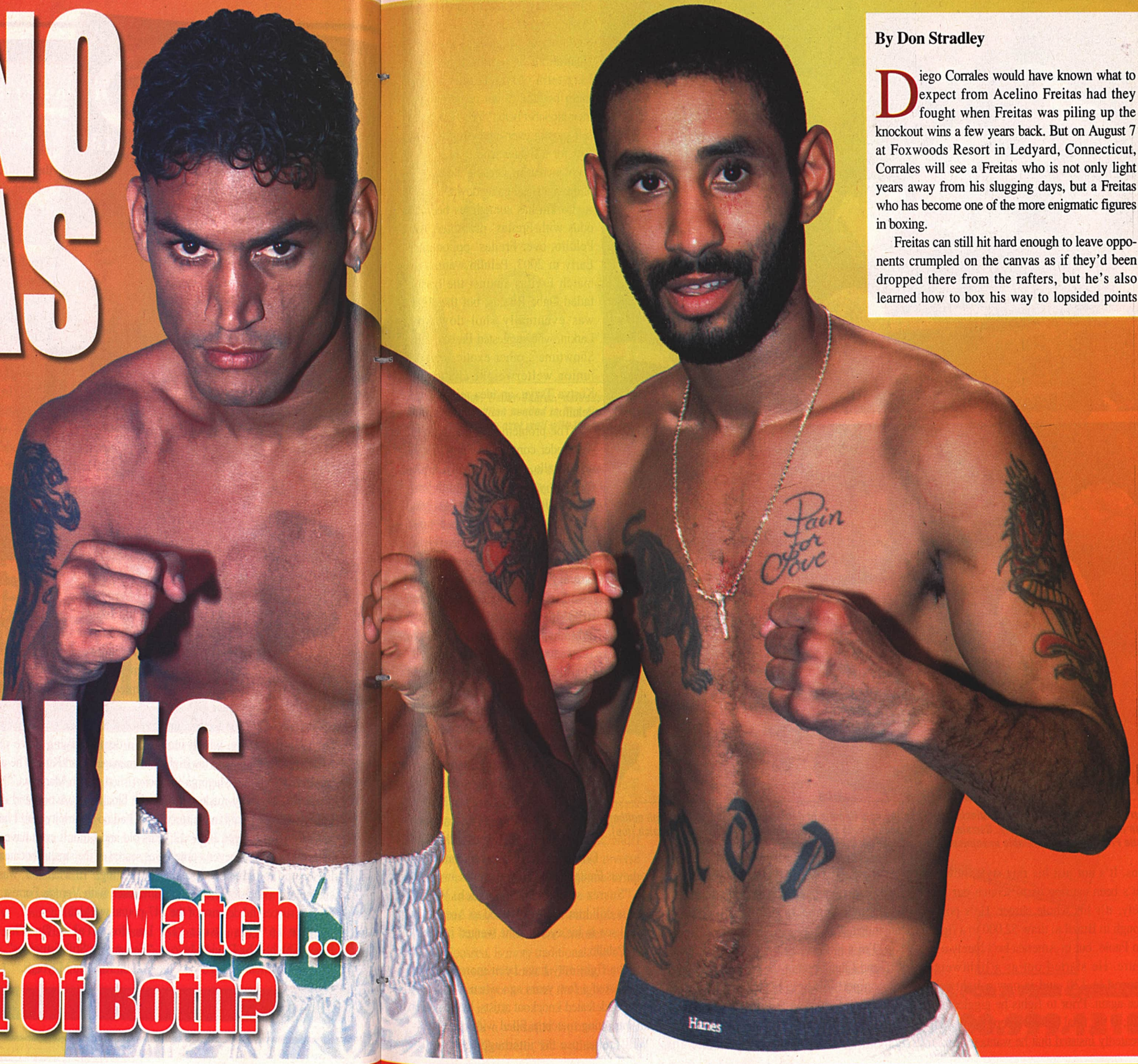
Cover Story: Joe Santoliquito explored Mayorga's wild personal habits in this story, which included a death-defying drive on a Nicaraguan hillside with his frightened manager, Carl King. The article delved deep into Mayorga's impoverished past in Managua. "My house was basically made up of cinder blocks with wood and dirt floors," Mayorga said in the story. "We had no electricity, and I had to suck up the hunger. I was 12 years old and I didn't even have a bike, but there was never a time I was scared of the streets, because I was used to fighting." Speaking of fighting, "El Matador" was coming off a decision victory in his rematch with Vernon Forrest, his first successful defense of the 147-pound world title.

Also In This Issue: "De La Hoya Takes On The Heavyweights" by David Mayo … "Fernando's Still Ferocious" by Ivan Goldman … Fighter of the Month: Ricardo Mayorga.

2000s

ACELINO FREITAS VS. DIEGO CORRALES

Slugfest, Chess Match... Or A Little Bit Of Both?



PHOTOS BY TOM CASINO

By Don Stradley

Diego Corrales would have known what to expect from Acelino Freitas had they fought when Freitas was piling up the knockout wins a few years back. But on August 7 at Foxwoods Resort in Ledyard, Connecticut, Corrales will see a Freitas who is not only light years away from his slugging days, but a Freitas who has become one of the more enigmatic figures in boxing.

Freitas can still hit hard enough to leave opponents crumpled on the canvas as if they'd been dropped there from the rafters, but he's also learned how to box his way to lopsided points

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Corrales and Freitas share the distinction of being the only fighters to defeat Joel Casamayor—though neither man did so all that definitively. Corrales edged Casamayor via split decision in their March '04 rematch (top), while Freitas took a debatable unanimous decision over the Cuban in January '02 (above).

wins. It's not just his ring style, however, that's been causing us to scratch our heads lately; it's his whole career. He's popular enough in Brazil to draw 52,000 to a fight in Sao Paolo, but in America he's barely a cult figure. He started out as a lightweight, dropped to 130, and is now a lightweight once again. Prior to fights he giggles like a child; at the final bell he weeps openly. He's repeatedly insisted that he wants to fight the best fighters available, yet he's spent the last two years fighting heavy underdogs.

No one knows what to think of Freitas anymore.

"I'm a little puzzled why he hasn't taken off, and I think part of the reason is the level of competition he's been fighting," said Showtime Senior Vice President of Sports Jay Larkin, who points to Freitas' meandering career as being partly responsible for Showtime's current policy of "Great fights, no rights," which came about because of Larkin's frustrations at signing fighters to long-term contracts only to see them bogged down in defending their alphabet belts. "You find yourself paying ever-increasing license fees for a fighter whose awareness is not increasing because the quality of the fights are going down."

Larkin has sometimes been at odds with Freitas' promoter, Art Pelullo, over Freitas' opponents. Early in 2003, Pelullo wanted to match Freitas against the badly faded Gabe Ruelas, but the fight was eventually shot down by Larkin, who suggested Freitas fight Showtime's other exotic import, junior welterweight champion Kostya Tszyu, an idea rejected by Pelullo.

"The problem was that Freitas was under contract to Showtime," said Pelullo, explaining why, aside from last year's back-and-forth battle with Jorge Barrios, Freitas has barely extended himself since winning the WBA super featherweight title from Joel Casamayor in January 2002. "The other 130-pound fighters were tied up at HBO. It's difficult to make those fights happen. Fortunately, Gary Shaw started promoting Diego Corrales, and Corrales started appearing on Showtime, which has made this fight possible."

Freitas' trainer, Oscar Suarez, had long wanted to match Freitas against Corrales, even though people around him thought the idea was crazy. At Foxwoods last March for Corrales' win over Casamayor, Suarez was impressed with how Corrales had improved, but still believes Freitas would blow Corrales away.

"Suarez said 'Make the match. We're gonna drill him.' When I talked to Acelino, I could see in his eyes that he wanted it, too," said Pelullo.

The fight may have been more eagerly anticipated a few years ago when both men were undefeated knockout artists, but it's still an intriguing matchup filled with questions. Will Freitas use the jitterbugging style he

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Freitas' trainer, Oscar Suarez, defends the alterations he's made to "Popo's" style, saying the undefeated Brazilian needed to find a way to get hit less. The awkward, box-and-move version of Freitas hasn't gone over well with the fans, however.

used last January to earn a decision win over Artur Grigorian, or will Corrales' shaky chin bring out Freitas' aggressive instincts? And will Freitas, who claims breast-feeding until the age of five is what gives him his strength, survive the murderous punches of Corrales?

"I know you guys criticize Acelino, but trainers see things from a different perspective," said Suarez, commenting on the offbeat movements Freitas used against Grigorian. "He used to be a banger, but he used to take a lot more punches, too. We had to make changes. Thank God, the changes have been working for him."

Suarez won't say if those changes will come into play against Corrales.

"Corrales has a devastating hook, and a decent straight right," said Suarez, "He'll probably try to outbox us, but we have a plan. Have you ever seen how they catch an alligator? I watch those animal channels, and I know that an alligator doesn't have reverse once he's in the cage. We're gonna bring Corrales to our cage."

Suarez may devise fight strategies by watching Animal Planet, but Corrales' trainer, Joe Goossen, is more traditional. He's also getting his second look at Freitas, having been in Casamayor's corner the night Freitas defeated him in '02.

"Freitas is a versatile fighter and he adapts," said Goossen. "He's athletic. He's clever. That's why he's undefeated. But what he's done in the past goes out the window. We'll focus on Diego and his strengths. Diego is a frightening guy to go up against. I'm sure Freitas is saying, 'This is the best fighter I've ever fought in my life.' So I give Freitas a lot of credit. I think it's gonna be one of the great fights of all-time."

When told that he'd been scouted and hand-picked by Suarez, Corrales laughed. "I'm glad they think so little of me," he said. "They think I'm easy, otherwise this fight wouldn't be taking place. But I'll get their respect in the ring. Anything he tries to do, I have the neutralizer."

Corrales isn't concerned with Freitas' quirky style, either.

"I know he's a very awkward fighter. I can't really plan anything, because you never know what he's gonna do. But I do know he's gonna be off-balance a lot. If I hit a man who is already off-balance, that just makes it easy for me to clean up and finish him off."

Corrales, 38-2 (31), plans to use the skills he displayed against Casamayor, skills he credits Goossen with bringing out and sharpening. But Goossen has done more than inspire Corrales to use more feints and jabs. The veteran trainer has also revived Corrales' love of the sport.

"Working with Joe has been so great," said Corrales. "He brought back a big part of

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Corrales' chin is a major question mark, as he was dropped once in his last fight against Casamayor (pictured), twice in their previous bout, and five times against Floyd Mayweather. To his credit, Corrales has gotten up from every knockdown.

the fun and the love that I lost a long time ago. It had become so rigid for me, but Joe makes it fun and light-hearted. You need that in a grueling business like boxing. He's just so calm in the corner. Even when I was knocked down by Casamayor (in their second fight) he said, 'Hey, you fell asleep in there. Are you okay? Good. Now let's take care of business.' I'll go to training camp a week early now because Joe makes it fun."

Goossen believes a victory over Freitas would make Corrales the man to beat in both the lightweight and junior lightweight divisions. "He can drop five pounds just by missing a meal," Goossen said of the lanky Corrales.

Corrales agrees that he could fight in both divisions, but said, "I have enough respect for Freitas that I'm giving all my attention to him. I can go back to 130, but I'll think about the future when the future comes."

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

New trainer Joe Goossen has made "Chico" a more well-rounded fighter, and has also made boxing fun for him again. Goossen predicts that Freitas-Corrales will be "one of the great fights of all-time."

Corrales' respect for Freitas borders on fondness.

"I think he's a great fighter and an awesome puncher," said Corrales. "I also like his gentlemanly personality. I definitely love him. I'm gonna enjoy getting in the ring and doing this thing with him."

While Corrales focuses on Freitas, Freitas is looking beyond the horizon. According to Suarez, "We hope that beating Diego Corrales will bring Floyd Mayweather to the table. That is Acelino's dream."

With Mayweather already staking out the 140-pound division, as well as being an HBO fighter, Freitas' dream fight may remain a dream. This frustrates him, as does the indifference of American fans and beat writers.

Said Suarez: "Acelino always

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Against Artur Grigorian in his most recent fight, Freitas benefited from several questionable knockdown calls, perhaps because his powerpunching reputation influenced the ref. In Corrales, however, Popo will for once be taking on an opponent who has a heavy-handed reputation of his own.

asks me, 'What will it take for me to be recognized as the true champion?'"

"After he beats Corrales there should be no more questions," said Pelullo. In actuality, there will still be questions because the fight is not for THE RING lightweight championship, but it could at least produce the number-one contender to the title. Regardless, Pelullo still envisions Freitas, 35-0 (31), becoming a star in America. Pelullo has also said Freitas' future is hard to predict and he wouldn't be surprised if "Popo" takes a break.

"The kid is under tremendous pressure all the time," said Pelullo. "He can't go anywhere in Brazil without being followed by 30 or 40 people. Most of his fans are poor people who don't really understand boxing. They don't imagine him ever losing. Freitas doesn't want to disappoint these people. It's like he has the entire country on his back."

One wouldn't blame Freitas for taking time off, even though inactivity would be a bad choice should he boost his stock with a win over Corrales. It's also not wise to look to the future when a fighter as dangerous as Corrales is ready to pounce on you.

The conventional wisdom regarding a Freitas-Corrales match has long been that Corrales' straighter punching style would be effective against Freitas' free-swinging stance, but there are intangibles to consider. For instance, opponents tend to fall at Freitas' feet, even when he's not hitting them. Freitas was credited with four knockdowns against Grigorian, even though three of them were pushes, and the sure-footed Casamayor turned clumsy against Freitas, resulting in a slip that was ruled a knockdown. It's as if Freitas' sheer energy can topple a man. Or perhaps referees know his reputation as a puncher and assume his pushes are punches. Corrales' challenge will be to avoid knockdowns, both real and fluky.

"It's a 50/50 fight," said *USA Today* boxing writer Dan Rafael. "Corrales definitely has a chance, but if it comes down to a shootout, I'd lean toward Freitas. He seems to have better powers of recovery than Corrales."

Four opponents have knocked Freitas down—Barry Jones, Lemuel Nelson, Juan Carlos Ramirez, and Barrios—but Freitas rose each time to win by knockout. While Freitas is 4-0 in fights where he's been floored, Corrales is only 1-2 under the same circumstances.

"It should be a great fight while it lasts," said Rafael.

Even after the fight is over, there will still be questions. Will the pressure of being a South American sports icon get to Freitas before he can find stardom in America? Will the still viable Casamayor be part of either fighter's future? Will Mayweather? Could this fight just be a pit stop for both fighters before they tackle the junior welters?

Corrales prefers to view the fight in terms of definitive statements rather than questions: "You have two of the biggest punchers in the world matching up. It's gonna be cool."

We couldn't have said it any better. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Rockport, Massachusetts, and a frequent contributor to this magazine.

The RING Update

LEON SPINKS

By Brian Doogan

He sat across a table at the Innkeeper's Lodge in Slough, a small motel near London's Heathrow Airport, as reluctant to discuss his life as he was being heavyweight champion. Leon Spinks was 24 when he conquered Muhammad Ali and the world, an Olympic gold medalist who scaled boxing's pinnacle in just his eighth paid fight. He is 50 now and in the intervening years he has paid the price for his jackpot night in Las Vegas, a win that was just too much to handle for a 24-year-old product of the Pruitt-Igoe Projects in St Louis.

"When I see Leon, I see a wounded person," his brother, Michael , once said. "I see this pain."

It was there to be seen in the near-empty glass of brandy that sat by his right hand, his umpteenth of the night. It rose in his gravelish voice when he searched for the detail of the day he beat the most famous man on earth, the king of the world, to become the new heavyweight king.

"Why are you asking me that? Why are you asking me stupid questions?" he complained.

Perhaps he was tired after an eight-day British tour, signing his name to gloves, old programs, and posters, and speaking to fans in Ruislip in west London, in the tragic Johnny Owen's hometown of Merthyr Tydfil in south Wales, and in a club in Liverpool where a band called The Beatles once made their name. But more likely it is the longer road that reached its peak on February 15, 1978, in Vegas and has

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

"I Didn't Understand What It Meant To Be Heavyweight Champ"

dipped almost forever since that had worn him down and left him feeling almost joyless.

Some of the stops on this road, lined with drink and drugs, have been utterly dispiriting. The ring that had brought him fame became his torture chamber. One fight after Muhammad Ali outpointed Spinks in their rematch before an indoor record crowd of 63,532 at The Superdome in New Orleans, the historic third time Ali had seized the heavyweight crown, he was stopped in a single round by Gerrie Coetzee. Then Larry Holmes beat Spinks mercilessly in three.

"I didn't like how Holmes tried to hurt my brother," said Michael, who would twice avenge his older brother's brutal defeat, so making the Spinkses the only brothers to wear the true world heavyweight belt. "Holmes did the same thing with Ali. And Ali would say how he's retiring after every fight, but he never would."

Neither would Leon. He dropped to cruiserweight and was stopped by Carlos DeLeon and Dwight Muhammad Qawi, and by the time he finished fighting in 1996, 10 years after declaring himself bankrupt, he was living in a homeless shelter in East St. Louis, sometimes earning $4.75 an hour temping as a janitor in a local labor pool. He had fallen far and felt as low as the humiliating night when he was mugged and left in a Detroit gutter, robbed of everything including his gold false teeth.

"I don't know if we could find Leon then," revealed Michael. "I wasn't keeping up with him. Leon meant a lot to me. I wanted us to do it all together. But, well, it hurts to see your own brother go through things like that."

Leon and his wife, Betty, found a small apartment in a lower-income section of the Chicago suburb Carol Stream with their sons, Tommy and Leon III. His first son, Leon Jr., had been a promising pro boxer, but he was shot and killed in 1991 in East St. Louis. Spinks worked as a greeter at the door of ex-Bears coach Mike Ditka's restau-

Spinks celebrates his monumental upset of Muhammad Ali in 1978 to capture the world heavyweight championship. Winning the title brought Spinks fame and fortune, but not contentment. Less than 10 years later, he declared bankruptcy.

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

Michael and Leon Spinks pose with their mother, Kay, after returning to St. Louis from the 1976 Olympics in Montreal (top), where both won gold medals. Eighteen years later, the brothers clown around with promoter Butch Lewis at the International Boxing Hall of Fame (above).

rant, many of whose patrons' first topic of dinner conversation was, "It's pretty amazing that this is the guy who beat Muhammad Ali."

The guy who beat Muhammad Ali; it was a label that would impact destructively on much of the rest of Spinks' life.

"It was scary really," Spinks related poignantly in the Innkeeper's Lodge, recalling what it was like to encounter the Ali legend in only his eighth fight as a pro. "I never thought I'd reach the point of being heavyweight champ."

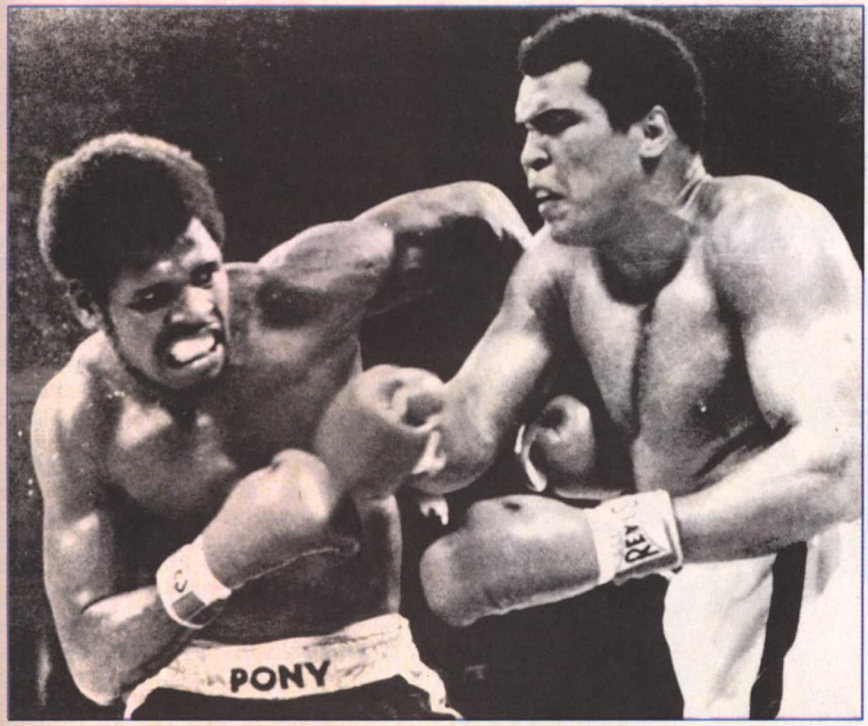
If Spinks was ill-equipped as a fighter—Ali, who was 36 and out of shape, described it as "embarrassing that a fighter with so little fighting skills could beat me"—he was even less prepared as a man. Whereas Ali rose from his bed the next night and went running down the freeway until he was exhausted, punching the cold air, and shouting, "I gotta get my title back," Spinks freewheeled out of control. In the seven months before the Ali rematch, he was arrested four times for offenses that ranged from driving the wrong way down a one-way street to possession of marijuana and cocaine.

"A lot of people hated me, like the cops. They were waiting for me to overstep the line," Spinks continued, a prisoner in denial of his own part in his downfall. "I didn't understand what it meant to be heavyweight champ. I was just Leon, and that's all I ever wanted to be, just Leon. So I learned the hard way."

Unable to handle the pressure, he disappeared when he should have been training in North Carolina. His manager, Butch Lewis, tracked him down to a little shack where the holder of the richest prize in sport sat drinking moonshine.

"He's smoking dope, groggier than hell, like this is a dream and he's going to enjoy it because any day he might wake up and it will all be over," Lewis revealed in Thomas Hauser's definitive biography of Ali. "That's how it was the whole time he was champ. Leon was supposed to be here, he'd be there. He's supposed to be there, he'd be here. Take him in the front door of a hotel and he'd keep on walking right out the back. At most, he trained 10 days for the rematch."

When Spinks reached New Orleans, he decided he "had to swoop," go off somewhere on his own. Mr. T, who later found fame as Clubber Lang in the *Rocky* movies and as B.A. Baracus on *The A-Team*, was



When Spinks lost to Ali in their rematch, it was the start of a downward spiral that eventually resulted in Spinks becoming homeless. These days, he earns his living on the autograph and appearance circuit.

his minder. The whole entourage had traveled from the airport to the hotel in limos. When they converged in the lobby, Lewis turned suddenly to Mr. T and asked, "Where's Leon?" Mr. T did not know. Spinks had hopped out of his limo into one of the others, drove himself to the outskirts of the city, and eventually rang his manager to say he was having a good time. "I'm okay," he reassured Lewis. "But I ain't going to say where I am."

When the bell rang, it was a better-conditioned Ali who came out of the opposite corner. Spinks was still someplace else, unable to stop The Greatest from marching back imperiously to his throne.

"All I know is that all of a sudden my life changed. Everything happened, and I wasn't ready for all of that," Spinks acknowledged. "I was trying to keep the title even if other people didn't see it that way. But I was in the ring with a legend. The man was my idol and the whole world was watching. They wanted to see history made. I just wanted to win the fight.

"Georgie Benton, who was my trainer, said there were too many people in the corner (Benton walked away from the ring in disgust after a handful of rounds). But I wasn't paying attention to who was there. All I was doing was trying to win. Anyway, why are you asking me some crazy question you already know the answer to? You saw the fight. You know."

But who can know, as acutely as Spinks knows, what it is to have it all and then to have nothing? To be so brutally exposed by Holmes, Ali's successor, as a novice who merely got lucky, to fight for peanuts and end up broke and homeless, suffering the indignity of being mugged in the street and laughed at? To work as a janitor for minimum wage and then at the door of Mike Ditka's Chicago restaurant? To live off signing autographs and talking about a past that can be haunting, drinking beer and brandy to suppress the demons and dilute the anguish of seeing the son named after you shot?

"I grew up with God—my mama taught me about God—and He's been with me through my life," Spinks reflected. "I had five brothers and one sister growing up in St. Louis and it was hard, rough. But life is hard. You do what you have to do to live. You do what you have to do to make it from day to day, and I did. All you can do is roll with the punches and keep on trying to live life the best way you can, and that's how it's been from St. Louis to here.

"I got into boxing because it was an opportunity to travel, and my thing was to lead my brother, Michael. I was everything to my brother. My brother was everything to me. We both inspired each other. We moti-

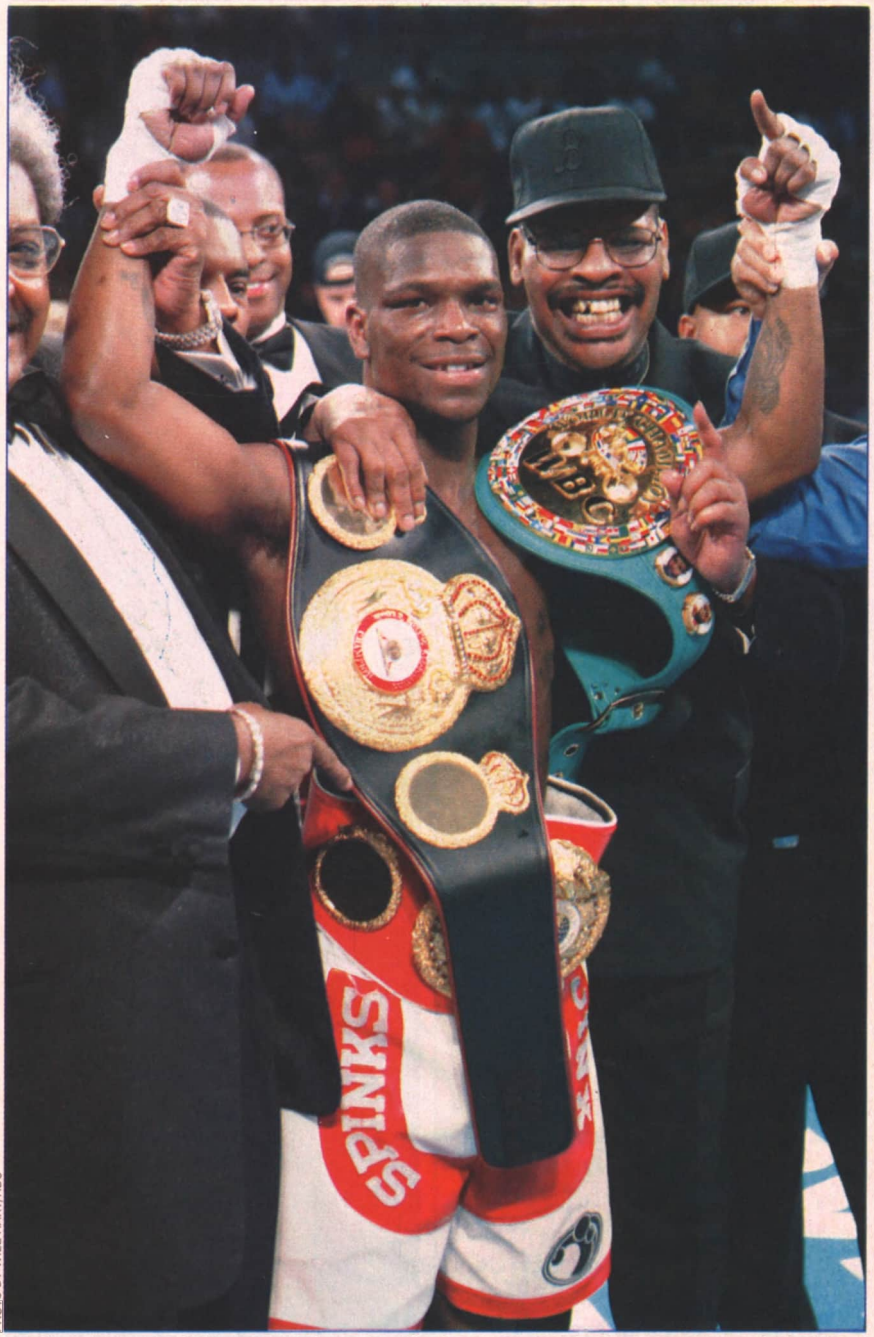


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Leon and his son, welterweight champion Cory, enjoy a moment in the spotlight together following Cory's victory over Zab Judah. The two have grown closer in recent years, following the death of Cory's mother.

vated each other. We were living off each other. That gave us the strength and God gave us the power to get there. But there are a lot of knocks, a lot of bumps along the way. People try to tear you down or people try to get in your way and things happen. You need to get those people and those things out of your way to push ahead, to try your best, and that's what I'm still trying to do."

He is also trying to preach a message to kids in his work with Chicago Social Services.

"I talk to kids about drugs and gang fighting and try to make them respect their parents," Spinks said. "I try to make them think with common sense. I used to say, 'I know a lot of people think I'm dumb. Well, at least I ain't no educated fool!' But they can get education and it's so important today. Drugs, gang fighting, they're big problems in Chicago. They're big problems everywhere. I've been involved in programs everywhere I've been, been involved since I was a kid. So I understand the problems because I went through the problems, and I tell these kids that they can do better than become a gang member or a drug pusher. They can do better."

Spinks' story is not all sad. The family's fighting legacy lives on in his 26-year-old son, Cory, the world welterweight champion. Spinks and Cory's mother, Zadie Mae Calvin, were high school sweethearts. They never married. Cory was born five days after his father's first fight with Ali. In 1999, Zadie Mae died of a stroke, and since then father and son have grown closer. When Cory successfully defended his titles against Zab Judah in April at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, his father embraced him in center ring during referee Joe Cortez' final instructions.

"It's in the blood," said Spinks. "Cory looks up to me and he looks up to his uncle, Michael. He has a lot to be proud of and when he steps in the ring he tries to make us proud of him."

A couple of years ago, Lydia Lyle Gibson wrote a delightful piece in the *Chicago Journal* about two ex-Marines, Jim Profitt and Eddie Cherven, who operate a food run on Sundays for the homeless and hungry on Chicago's west side. When Gibson joined them in the truck to research her story, she found herself shaking hands, too, with Spinks.

"I'm a veteran, too, of the Marine Corps, and this is my way of helping out," Spinks told Gibson. He was there to dispense sandwiches and juice drinks along Maxwell Street. "I love to put a smile on these people's faces."

He talked boxing with those who asked him, but otherwise he was busy filling cups, handing out sandwiches, or searching through bins of clothes for the right size shirt or pants or underwear to give to one of the homeless waiting outside the truck.

"Hey, Leon Spinks just handed me a cup of coffee and a pair of underwear!" cried out one man whose grin was suddenly as distinguishing as Spinks'.

His face, with those missing front teeth that prompted Ali to nickname him "Goofy," will always be recognized. But his smile is not always so easy to discern. When Spinks stood up to return to his room in the Innkeeper's Lodge, he was troubled.

"You ask me the craziest questions," he growled before walking down a corridor, a little unsteady and all alone. ■

Brian Doogan is THE RING's European correspondent.

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BROTHERS -IN- ARMS

By Mike Houser

PHOTOS BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

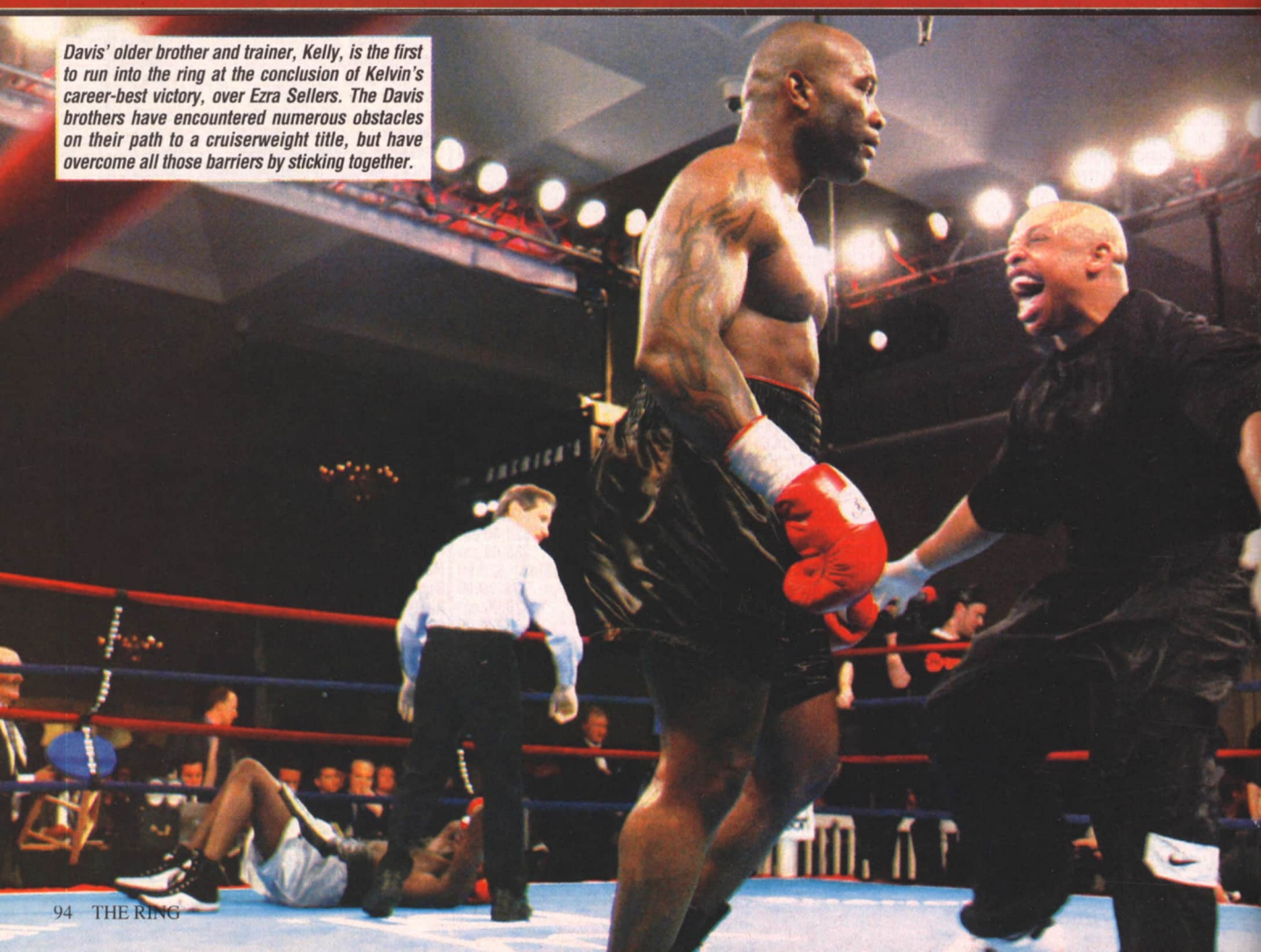
Maybe the guys from the local television station had been up all night and were having a bad day. Maybe the suit they were interviewing at the airport was spouting the most memorable quotes since Shakespeare held a quill.

Or maybe there is no good excuse for why "Koncrete" Kelvin Davis went unnoticed by the news crew as he walked through Reno-Tahoe International Airport, his IBF cruiserweight belt with its distinctive red strap wrapped around his waist.

The guys with the noses for news missed the subtleties unfolding a few yards away: "Are you Kelvin Davis?" an elderly woman asked him.

"Yes, ma'am," Davis answered, a smile creasing his tattoo-adorned face.

"Honey! He's over here!" the lady shouted to her husband, who had visited



Davis' older brother and trainer, Kelly, is the first to run into the ring at the conclusion of Kelvin's career-best victory, over Ezra Sellers. The Davis brothers have encountered numerous obstacles on their path to a cruiserweight title, but have overcome all those barriers by sticking together.

How Kelvin & Kelly Davis Took Their Two-Man Bandwagon To The Top

Davis at the new Koncrete gym in Reno as he prepared for his May 1 fight with Ezra Sellers that earned him the vacant IBF strap. The man came over and shook Davis' hand and congratulated him.

If the camera crew and the TV reporters had bothered to show up even once at the new gym, perhaps they would have recognized Davis, too. If they would've bothered to pick up the sports section of one of the local newspapers on one of the previous two days, they would've learned that Davis, in the 120 or so years of gloved combat, was the first boxer from Reno or Northern Nevada to ever win a major title.

It was big news in Reno, and rightly so, when the University of Nevada basketball team made it all the way to the NCAA Tournament's Sweet 16 in March. But here was a guy who proudly represented "The Biggest Little City" and was getting the littlest little recognition for his accomplishment.

After signing a few autographs and going over to claim his baggage with his brother and trainer, Kelly, and after getting a kiss on the cheek from his little nieces, Kelli and Kelise, Davis told a friend not to bother to inform the benighted camera crew.

"I'd expect them to be there for me, but it doesn't matter," the 25-year-old Davis said. "I was just on national television. I put the town on the map. I made history for this city. Who else from around here is going to win a title anytime soon? What else do I have to do?"

With that, Davis climbed into a taxi with his brother and nieces and went over to his mother's house, where he would watch the fight for the first time since he won it.

Davis' mother, Frances, had taken her two boys from their hometown of Natchez, Mississippi, and relocated to Reno in 1983. She married a hard-working, religious man named Roy Gaines shortly thereafter.

A proud, strong-willed woman who speaks her mind, Frances started her own cleaning business and attended the University of Nevada, where she pursued

Sellers tries his best to block this right hand from Davis, but it gets through nevertheless. Giving away six inches in height, "Koncrete" swarmed Sellers throughout the fight, showing a level of aggression that Sellers couldn't cope with.

Sellers' only moments of success came when he landed the counter uppercut, a punch that the offense-minded Davis was often open for. But Davis showed a tremendous chin, never wobbling despite being cracked by a man who'd scored 24 knockouts among his 26 wins.

her interest in art. She had known something was not quite right at school for Kelly, the older of her two sons by four years, but she couldn't put her finger on it. Then one day when her art teacher showed up on time and sober for a change, he singled out the oldest student in class—who also happened to be the only black student in class—and sarcastically asked her why she bothered to go to school at her age.

"Right then," Frances recalled, "I knew what my boys were going through."

Almost.

Kelly took his beatings in school and never said a word to his mother. Aware that his skin tone was just a shade lighter than Kelvin's, Kelly came to a hard conclusion.

"I was too light for Mississippi, which was all black where I came from, and I was too black for Reno," Kelly said. "It tweaks your mind. I didn't know what a 'coon' was till I was in third grade. When they called me a coon, I didn't get mad because I didn't even know what it was."

Kelly began fighting back in middle school and soon he was getting the better of most of his fights, but more important, he never gave up. He'd even pick on Kelvin, who by now was also getting pounded on in school.

"I'd beat on him every chance I got," said Kelly. "Why? Because he was just sitting there, minding his own business. He was a puss. He never fought back."

Maybe it was just Kelly's way of teaching Kelvin the only way he knew how. But when Kelvin made the honor roll in fifth grade, he learned the cold facts of life the hard way, and a white female teacher of his showed her true colors. "That's got to be a mistake," she said of his achievement, before adding that he'd be dead before he was 21.

One day, in the seventh grade, a kid named Shawn Perkins, one of Kelly's friends who would one day be Kelvin's as well, had just beaten up Kelvin and thrown sand in his face.

"I'd look to Kelly for help—'Get him off me!' I'd go home crying," Kelvin remembered. "He'd just choked me out in the park. My brother was like, 'Go get that f---er. Knock his ass out!' Shawn was like, 'Come on, motherf---er!' Something in my mind just clicked. I screamed. From that day on I was a fighter."

As the years went on, Kelvin followed his older brother around everywhere he went, and for whatever reason, Kelly's older friends all wanted to try and beat up his little brother. "Go ahead and try," Kelly would

After scoring a knockdown in the fourth round with a right hand, Davis scored two knockdowns in the eighth with his left hook. Sellers was known for getting off the canvas to win in previous fights, but Davis never gave the veteran warrior a chance on this night in Miami.

Kelly Davis exuberantly lifts his baby brother in the air. Kelly had no boxing background to speak of when he took Kelvin to Las Vegas to start his pro career, but he learned the game well enough that by the time their tumultuous Vegas experience ended, Kelly was Kelvin's head trainer.

say, and he'd watch with amusement while Kelvin would literally knock them out.

One day, caught up in the fog of Reno's nightlife, it hit Kelly. He saw his brother had a special talent. They both had once dreamed of being running backs in the NFL. Kelly played for the semi-pro Reno Heat football team for a couple of years, and Kelvin played at Sacramento City Community College. But as Kelly watched his brother sending guys flying through the air with a single punch, he knew it was time to change directions and move on to a different sport.

If you want money, go to a bank; if you want to box, go to Las Vegas. So it was down to "Sin City," and Kelly put his life on hold and spent the mornings riding on a garbage truck to pay the bills so all Kelvin had to do was fight. The first visit was to Kenny Adams, who at the time was training light heavyweight Derrick Harmon and junior welterweight Vince Phillips.

"He told me he charged $1,500 a week to train a fighter," Kelly said of Adams. "I said, 'I can't pay that kind of money.' He wouldn't even tell me where to take my brother. Then Phillips said to take him to Johnny Tocco's. It was a dirty sweat box. When the fighters jumped rope, the dust came up. For $40 a week, Tyrone Booze trained Kelvin for a while, but every time I came in, he looked the same, he shadow-boxed the same. He wanted to learn. He wanted to be fed, but all I heard was how long it takes."

Then it was over to Nevada Partners gym and to former referee Richard Steele.

"Steele came over with his gravelly voice and said, 'What are you doing here?'" Kelly recalled. "'My brother came here to learn to box,' I said. Steele said, 'Why? Why?' Kelvin said, 'I want to be the heavyweight champion of the world.'"

It was then that the brothers heard the first of many laughs. The laughs grew bigger as two-division former titlist Roger Mayweather took over for $30 a week and began to call Kelvin "Baby Tyson." What was probably intended as a compliment turned out to be an insult, in Kelly's opinion.

"They'd bring in some big heavyweight and Mayweather would say, 'Throw him in there with Baby Tyson.' They'd all laugh as my brother knocked out all these big dudes. They didn't care about my brother. They didn't love him like I did."

Nobody noticed as Kelly took notes on how many rounds the trainers made their fighters hit the bags or punch mitts, or how long they sparred or how far they ran. Nobody noticed Kelly soaking up all the tricks that the coaches passed on to their charges.

Time passed, and as Kelvin was progressing as a pro, Kelly was butting heads with all the trainers. According to Kelly, things all came to a head in Las Vegas when heavyweight Herbie Hide and Kelvin kept fighting after the bell in a heated sparring session.

"When 'The Body Snatcher' (former junior middleweight and middleweight beltholder Mike McCallum) held Kelvin's arms back, Hide punched him in the face," Kelly said. "I got in the ring and knocked Hide out."

Tired of arguing with trainers who kept

The newest member of Team Davis is promoter Don King, who just happens to promote most of the world's top cruiserweights. Davis wants to eventually shoot for the heavyweight championship, but for now, it looks like a cruiserweight tournament may be in the cards for him.

trying to pull rank on him, tired of boxing people thinking they could talk to him like a street punk, Kelly said it was a free-for-all as he was swinging at anyone and everyone. The encounter with Hide left an impression on Kelly—literally. According to Kelly, Hide bit Kelly on the back, where there is still a large imprint of upper and lower teeth.

Fed up with Las Vegas and with the trainers there, Kelly, who had never boxed or trained before, decided he could do a better job training his brother. Nobody was sorry to see the Davis brothers go back to Reno to build a foundation, a home where Kelly told Kelvin that fans would back their fighter like those in Buffalo get behind heavyweight "Baby" Joe Mesi.

That hasn't been true so far. But maybe the seeds for making Reno take notice were planted when Davis, 21-2-1 (16), dominated the respected veteran contender Sellers, 26-6 (24). The 5'7" Davis, who had only seven amateur bouts, put down his 6'1" opponent three times, once in the fourth with a right hook when he temporarily switched to southpaw, and twice in the eighth and final round with left hooks.

Davis was the aggressor throughout, ringing Sellers' bell in the second, bombing him along the ropes and opening up cuts over both eyes in the fifth, and showing significantly more head movement than at any other time in his career.

What made Davis' performance even more impressive was that he came to Florida prepared to fight at 200 pounds, as his contract had stipulated. After an IBF official informed him the bout would be at 190—Sellers' contract stated that the bout be contested at "cruiserweight," and 190 is the IBF's division limit—Davis decided he had come too far to be denied and dropped nearly 10 pounds in less than 24 hours, weighing in at 190 with his clothes on.

While analyzing Davis following the one-sided bout, Showtime's ringside commentator Al Bernstein invoked the name of Orlin Norris, a one-time WBA cruiserweight titlist who, at 5'9", chose to move up to heavyweight rather than potentially dominate his division. Unlike Norris, Davis started his career at heavyweight, scoring 16 straight victories, with 12 knockouts. Heavyweight, he says, is where his destiny lies.

But for now, he's a cruiserweight—and a top-five RING-rated cruiser at that. Eric Bottjer, matchmaker for Davis' new promoter, Don King, said a cruiserweight tournament is in the making and the once stagnant division now holds promise.

WBC titlist Wayne Braithwaite would make for an exciting matchup with Davis. Braithwaite has shown good punching power, but looked vulnerable when Louis Azille stunned him early in "Big Truck's" most recent title defense. A bout with WBA beltholder Jean-Marc Mormeck, a decent boxer-puncher, would also be attractive. And depending on the outcome of Roy Jones-Antonio Tarver II, a showdown with one of those big names is possible if either of them desires to go after a cruiserweight belt.

"He can fit in with all those guys," said Davis' former promoter, Lou Duva. "And there's enough small guys in the heavy-

weights that I think he can do well there. Guys like Chris Byrd, James Toney, Joe Mesi. When you're dealing with Don King, you've got a master promoter. I think they can get lucky."

Slowly but surely, Davis has been getting lucky with the Reno media since the Sellers bout. A TV station did a piece on "Reno's first world champion." Then a radio station called Kelly for a possible interview. At the Team USA-Puerto Rico dual boxing meet May 7 at the Eldorado Hotel Casino Showroom, Davis was introduced to a cheering crowd of 500. The next day he was signing autographs and lecturing kids against the evils of drugs.

"They stuck together, rightly or wrongly," Steele said of the Davis brothers after the Sellers fight. "That's one of the strengths they have. They believe in each other. Those guys have been through so much—they've been kicked around and knocked around so much, it's hard for them to drop their guard."

When told that Steele, Adams, and Mayweather had all expressed happiness at his success, Kelly remained skeptical.

"We've been through five years of pain [as a pro]," Kelly said. "You don't kill five years of pain by saying you're happy for us. After we won the title and came back, all the guys at the casinos and all the guys at the other gyms in town kept putting their arms around us and shaking our hands. If we lose, it'll go back to the way it was. They're never going to care. I'm going to keep being real and keep a small circle."

As he signed autographs at the dual meet, Kelvin Davis had a smile on his face, but it wasn't the same kind of grin he gets when he talks of how his mother and brother used to catch him standing in front of mirrors, visualizing himself as a world champion.

"They're all on the bandwagon now," said Kelvin, who was back in training four days after he fought Sellers. "I can count on one hand who was there for us before."

Reno's casinos were built on the money of people who believed in dreams. It's awfully ironic that a city full of people that understand this reality haven't really backed two of its own, a pair of brothers who overcame long odds, beat the house, and achieved their dreams. ■

Mike Houser is a boxing columnist for the Nevada Appeal and a frequent contributor to this magazine.

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Finally, A Feel-Good Story Out Of Iraq

THE TERMITE WHO WANTS TO CHANGE THE WORLD

"Iraq is back!" The effervescent Watkins leads his band of Iraqi boxers in a cheer. The former junior welterweight contender went to Iraq to as part of a pest control crew, but wound up coaching the country's Olympic boxing team.

PHOTO BY JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

By Robert Mladinich

Former junior welterweight contender Maurice "Termite" Watkins was working as a Chevrolet salesman in his native Houston, Texas, when four hijacked airliners changed the course of history on September 11, 2001. Like so many other Americans, he watched helplessly as rescue and recovery workers scoured through mountainous debris in New York, Washington, D.C., and rural Pennsylvania. He desperately wanted to help, but found himself frustratingly observing the historic events unfold from the sidelines. The United States has since gone to war in Afghanistan and Iraq, and now, less than three years after the attacks that have reshaped the world, Watkins finds himself standing front and center in the monumental rebuilding effort in war-torn Iraq.

In the winter of 2003, Watkins, whose family has been in the pest control business in Houston for decades, accepted an overseas position with the coalition forces in Iraq. His job description was vector control, which stands for the elimination of any dangerous disease-carrying pests such as bugs and snakes, both of which abound in the Middle East. Although Watkins had left his family business 15 years earlier, he viewed this opportunity as a sign of divine providence. A year earlier he inexplicably told his wife, Sharla, that he envisioned himself playing some sort of role in shaping the future of the beleaguered nation.

"I was in Texas and the war was fixing to start," the perennially upbeat Watkins, who will turn 48 in August, told *The New York Times*. "And I looked at my wife, and I says, 'Honey, I think I'm the one to change that country.' And she says, 'Termite, you can't go around changing countries.' And I said, 'Honey, you can try.'"

Watkins had been in Iraq less than a month when he began making more of a difference than even he, always the eternal optimist, could have imagined. He was working as a contractor for the Kellogg, Brown & Root Company when he met a British officer who remembered him from his fighting days. Having already discovered a dusty heavybag in his camp, Watkins began training overworked coalition personnel who had little time for exercise.

It was a rudimentary Middle East version of white collar boxing, but it soon caught the attention of Dr. Mounzer Fatfat, an American citizen from Pittsburgh who was working in Baghdad as the senior advisor to the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sport. Realizing the symbolic significance of sending an Olympic boxing team to the Summer Games in Athens in August, it took him all of five minutes to hire Watkins as the coach of the ragtag team, whose 11 members range in age from 17 to 34. Up until then, the only training the team did with any consistency was shadowbox in courtyards and beat each other bloody with gloveless fists.

"They had no gear and almost all of them were barefooted," explained Watkins in his effervescent Texas drawl. "They didn't even have any mouthpieces."

The resourceful Dr. Fatfat managed to procure some of Saddam Hussein's seized assets to purchase much-needed equipment for the team. Still, Watkins encountered no shortage of resistance from the boxers, which he initially found difficult to comprehend. While he originally thought it had to do with him being viewed as an interloper, he soon learned

***Lone Star warrior:** This is how Watkins looked in 1989, a year before he hung up his gloves following a 16-year pro career that saw him compile a 59-5-2 (40) record, including a 15-round decision loss to then-WBC junior welter titleholder Saoul Mamby in 1980.*

PHOTO BY KARIM SAHIB/GETTY IMAGES

A U.S. soldier watches as members of the Iraqi national boxing team stand in line to receive their equipment at the new boxing center in Hilla, Iraq. Some of the former regime's assets were used to purchase the equipment for the team.

that their lack of enthusiasm and camaraderie, even among themselves, had nothing to do with him. There was a pervasive fear among the athletes that was hard to shake.

Under the recently ousted regime, Iraqi athletes who performed poorly were treated especially harshly by Uday Hussein, the nefarious son of Saddam who had been the longtime head of the Iraqi National Olympic Committee. He was known to rape women and force soccer players to kick cement balls with their bare feet. Boxers would often be forced to assume a fighter's stance, and then allow Uday to beat them.

"It was like he watched *Rocky* too many times," Razool Jabur, one of Watkins' assistant coaches, told *The New York Times*. "Uday would hit you and hit you. But if you returned a punch, he would shoot you."

As difficult as it was, Watkins' can-do personality, which *Times* reporter Jeffrey Gettleman said "brims with the energy of a shaken soda can," soon won over the athletes. He even created a slogan, "Iraq Is Back," which quickly became a mantra that was jubilantly shouted before and after every training session at the Hilla Sports Club in south-central Iraq. That chant was soon taken up by other athletes, including swimmers, wrestlers, weightlifters, runners, and soccer players, who could finally compete without fear of retaliation against themselves or their families. The field was so open, even a 50-year-old woman who was blind in one eye tried to make the national team as a javelin thrower.

Just 57 days after taking over the team's reins, Watkins escorted them to the Asian Games in the Philippines. They have since competed in Olympic qualifying matches in China and Pakistan, and in the early summer traveled to the United States to train in Texas, Michigan, and Georgia. The Iraqis have not sent a fighter to the Olympics since 1988, and have not won a medal of any kind since 1960, when a bronze was garnered for weightlifting.

"In the past they only performed through fear," said Watkins. "It was always in their mind that if they didn't do well, their families may be killed, or they may be tortured or raped. The athletes now are excited because they're actually fighting for the love of the sport. If they can compete in the Olympics, their whole life could change."

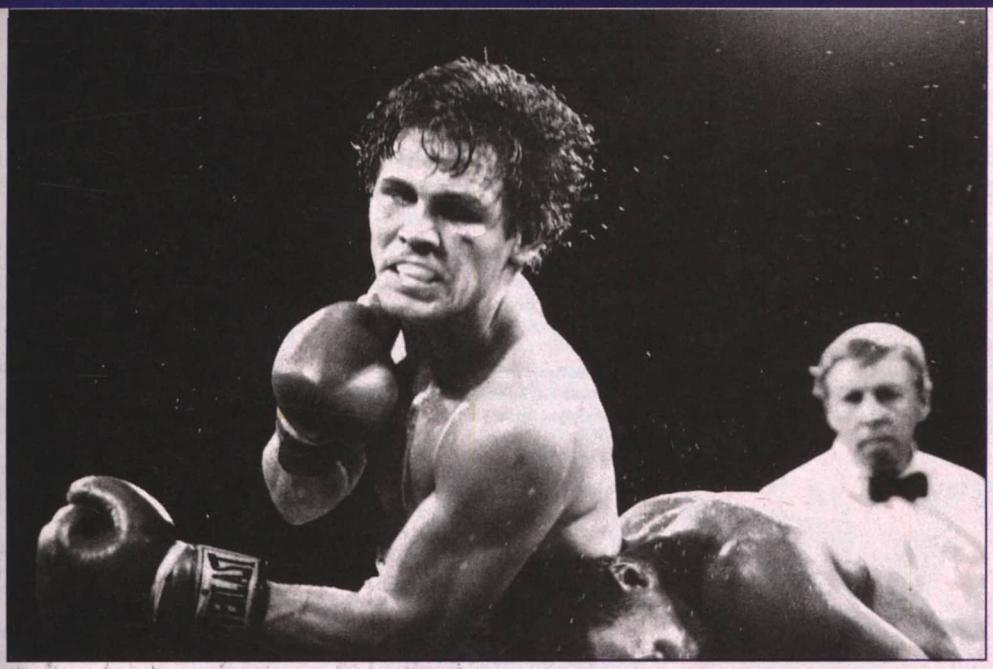
"We feel much better now," boxer Zuhier Khudier told the Associated Press. "The Americans are offering moral support. Now we feel motivated by national pride, not by fear of Uday."

The key to Watkins' success had as much to do with his past as his present. When he saw the hunger in the eyes of the Iraqi boxers, he could not help but think back to his own sometimes troubled youth. An undersized boy, he started boxing under his father Bill's tutelage when he was 10 years old. (Oddly enough, Termite's nickname did not stem from his family's pest control business or his diminutive stature as a youngster. In actuality, the name stuck after a family friend told Bill Watkins that his newborn son resembled a termite.)

Watkins quickly found not only that he was a good boxer, but also that the sport gave him the sense of purpose and direc-

PHOTO BY KARIM SAHIB/GETTY IMAGES

Watkins and his four Iraqi assistants put the national boxing team through their paces. Originally, Watkins was hopeful that he could help at least one Iraqi boxer make to the Olympics, but now he thinks the entire 11-man squad has a chance of making it to Athens.



Watkins has former WBC 140-pound titlist Alfredo Escalera ducking for cover in their November 1982 bout in Miami, Florida, in which Watkins dropped a close 10-round decision.

tion he so desperately needed and wanted in his life. He won many amateur accolades, including the 1973 National Golden Gloves lightweight championship. Considered the frontrunner to make the 1976 Olympic team, he instead left the amateur ranks with a 102-10 record to turn pro in May 1974, three months shy of his 18th birthday. By the time five of his amateur teammates on the USA Boxing world tour team won gold medals at the '76 Olympics in Montreal, Watkins was a veteran of 27 professional bouts, only one of which was a loss.

Unfortunately, he did not enjoy the tremendous success he had as an amateur in the professional ranks. The highlight of his career was losing a close but unanimous 15-round decision to WBC junior welterweight titleholder Saoul Mamby on the televised undercard of the infamous Larry Holmes-Muhammad Ali bout in October 1980. He also lost close decisions to former WBC junior lightweight champion Alfredo Escalera and Howard Davis Jr. It was Davis who garnered the 1976 Olympic spot that so many people had already slated for Watkins. Davis won a gold medal, as well as the Val Barker Award as the competition's best boxer, but also had a disappointing pro career. After severely injuring his wrist in his final fight, in 1990, Watkins hung up his gloves for good with a more than respectable record of 59-5-2 (40).

Rather than join his father in the family pest control business, Watkins began selling automobiles. His infectious energy and downright likeability enabled him to become, year after year, one of General Motors' top earners. It was only the chance to change the course of history in Iraq that pulled him off of the car lot. While he admits to originally being a bit hesitant about leaving his wife of more than two decades, she wholeheartedly supported his decision, even though he would be moving halfway around the world. After all, their two children, Jared and Tessa, were grown, and her husband believed he was responding to a higher calling. When it soon became apparent that he would be enhancing both his fistic and humanitarian legacy, Sharla was elated.

"It's more or less his love," she told the *Dallas Morning News*. "Termite fought for so long and trained for so long. I'm really excited for him."

While Sharla and Termite are keenly aware of the dangers for civilians living and working in Iraq, they both believe so strongly in Termite's mission, they have adjusted to living amid their persistent fears.

"It's always on your mind, that's for sure," said Termite. "Are we going to get hit by mortars, grenades, car bombs, human bombs? But it's truly a privilege to work with the military and the Iraqi people. We do have to overcome one thing after another—like no equipment, no electricity, no water. It's a major ordeal, but it's worth it."

As dangerous as his surroundings are, and even though Watkins has been told that there is a bounty on his life, he is so committed to the people of Iraq, he refuses to wear any form of body armor while making his daily rounds.

"I don't want anyone to think I don't trust the Iraqi people," he explained. "This is a country of wonderful people who I've grown to love and adore, and they truly need a helping hand. I came to this country to support the military in pest control because that is all I could do, and ended up where I am today. I came to be a servant, but I am the one that has been truly blessed. I am the one that has gained so much, and I'm not even talking about just boxing. I have learned just how fortunate I really am. Even when I was at the lowest point of my life, I was still so well off compared to these people."

"Termite is a phenomenal human being," said Hector Berdecia, an NYPD sergeant and U.S. Army National Guard reservist who was stationed in Hilla as a staff sergeant with the Coalition Provisional Authority. He even arranged a basketball game between the reservists and Watkins' fledgling boxing team. "What he did with the team in such a short time is amazing. They are much better boxers than they are basketball players, but you can see the love the boxers have for Termite and the love he has for them. In a place where things are not always so positive, that was great to see."

While Watkins' original expectations were low, all of the positive changes among his quixotic bunch of ring warriors have led him to shoot for the moon.

"My original goal was to get one guy qualified for the Olympics," he said. "But these athletes are such hard workers and in such good shape, I'm going for all 11. It wouldn't surprise me if we surprise a lot of people in Athens." ■

Robert Mladinich is a freelance writer based in New York City and a frequent contributor to this magazine.

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Oct. 1986: Hector "Macho" Camacho Retains His Title, But Loses His Nickname. Plus: Mike Tyson, Michael Olajide Jr., Gerry Cooney.

Nov. 1986: World Boxing Exclusive: Gerry Cooney Speaks Out. Plus: Tyson-Frazier, Steve Cruz, Evander Holyfield, Barry McGuigan.

Dec. 1986: Mike Tyson's Drive To The Title: Ruthless, Brutal, Unstoppable. Plus: Hagler-Leonard, Meldrick Taylor, Thomas Hearns, Tyrell Biggs.

Jan. 1987: The Formidable Mike Tyson: Primed For His Title Challenge. Plus: Michael Spinks, Vinny Pazienza, Bobby Czyz, Curry-Honeyghan, Hagler-Leonard, Berbick-Tyson.

Feb. 1987: Mark Breland: The Class Of '84. Plus: Thomas Hearns, Lloyd Honeyghan, Camacho-Rosario, Olympians.

March 1987: Year In Review. Plus: Marvin Johnson, Tyson-Berbick, Larry Holmes.

April 1987: Tyson vs. Bonecrusher: Who Will Survive Their Unification War? Plus: Hagler-Leonard, Greg Haugen, John Mugabi, Julio Cesar Chavez.

May 1987: Hagler-Leonard: Super Fight Or Super Slaughter? Plus: Mike Tyson, Chris Reid, The Dynamite Dozen.

June 1987: Shining Stars: Pazienza, Holyfield, Curry. Plus: Hagler-Leonard, Bobby Czyz.

July 1987: After The Bonecrusher Bore: Mike Tyson's Task—Rekindle The Excitement. Plus: Thomas Hearns, George Foreman, Tyrell Biggs, Spinks-Cooney.

Aug. 1987: The Return Of The Sugar Man: After Conquering Hagler, Now Aiming For Hearns? Plus: Boxing lists, Spinks-Cooney, Mike McCallum.

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Oct. 1987: Erasing The Doubts—Vinny Pazienza Proves He's A Phenom, Not A Phony. Plus: Mike Tyson, Williams-Cooper, Spinks-Cooney, George Foreman.

Nov. 1987: Down And Out In Las Vegas: Donald Curry's Crushing Fall. Plus: Duarte-Davila, Thomas Hearns, Meldrick Taylor.

Dec. 1987: Tyson vs. Biggs: The Frazier-Ali Of The '80s? Plus: Evander Holyfield, Miguel Lora, Shawn O'Sullivan, hardest hitters.

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Aug. 1989: Leonard-Hearns: Dressed To Kill. Plus: Azumah Nelson, Larry Holmes, Michael Nunn.

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Dec. 1989: On The Money! Mike Tyson Kayos Carl Williams. Plus: Summer Sizzlers color insert, Julian Jackson, Anthony Hembrick, Camacho-Pazienza.

Feb. 1990: Leonard-Duran: An Analysis Of The Grudge Match. Plus: Leonard-Duran color insert, Whitaker-Nelson, Mike Tyson, Marlin Starling.

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SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Samuel Peter W 10 Charles Shufford
Audley Harrison W 12 Julius Francis
Leo Nolan W 12 Lou Savarese
Gerald Nobles KO 9 Bruce Seldon
Calvin Brock W 10 Terry Smith
Larry Donald W 10 Sedreck Fields
Danny Williams KO 3 Augustin Ngou
Ray Austin KO 4 Gilbert Martinez
Owen Beck KO 1 Byron Polley
Ruslan Chagaev KO 1 Wade Lewis
Courage Tshabalala KO 2
Frankie Edmondson
Rob Calloway KO 2 Jeff Ford
Bob Mirovic KO 1 Mosese Kavika
Alexander Dimitrenko KO 2
Ramon Earl Hayes
Rydell Booker KO 3 Ken Murphy
Don Diego Poeder KO 1 Petr Horacek
B.J. Flores KO 1 Brian Maclin
Butterbean KO 2 Rodney Phillips
Butterbean W 4 Marcelo Aravena

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Jean-Marc Mormeck W 12 Virgil Hill
(Retains WBA Title)
Steve Cunningham W 10
Sebastian Rothman
Julio Gonzalez W 10 Olando Rivera
David Haye KO 3 Arthur Williams
Darnell Wilson D 12 James Lubwama
Orlin Norris W 8 Roberto Coelho
Pavel Melkomian KO 8 Gabor Halasz
Chad Van Sickle KO 1 Michael Shanks
Joey Spina KO 4 Salah Zabian

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Antonio Tarver KO 2 Roy Jones
(Wins World Title)
Zsolt Erdei W 12 Hugo Garay
Stipe Drews W 12 Konstantin Shvets
Rico Hoye KO 4 Richard Hall
Montell Griffin KO 4 Willard Lewis
Omar Sheika KO 2 Etienne Whitaker
James Butler W 6 Reggie Strickland

PHOTO BY GREG MARNANE

Junior middleweight Peter Manfredo buries a left in Anthony Bonsante's side

Anthony Hanshaw KO 3 Tyrus Armstead
Troy Weaver KO 1 Dean Williams
Ann Wolfe KO 1 Vonda Ward

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Antwun Echols W 10 Ross Thompson
Mario Veit W 12 Kabary Salem
Mark Woolnough W 10 Jose Spearman
Jorge Sendra W Disq. 7 Roberto Vecchio
Vitali Kopytko W 6 Robert Muhammad
Richard Grant W 6 Jacob Rodriguez
Yusef Mack D 8 Randy Griffin

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Koren Gevor W 8 Sergey Tatevosyan
Bert Schenk KO 3 Azedine Djerrari
Hassan Al KO 6 Candy Robertson
Mpush Makembi KO 6 Fanisile Ngcanga
Franck Mezaache W 10 Denis Saioni
Scott Dunn KO 3 Danny Thornton
Sergio Mora W 8 Les Ralston
Dennis Sharpe KO 4 Earl Allen
Jesus Gonzales W 6 Francisco Mendez

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Roman Karmazin No-Contest 4
Jason Papillion
Yory Boy Campas KO 1 Anthony Shuler
Marco Antonio Rubio KO 1 Fitz Vanderpool
Peter Manfredo W 12 Anthony Bonsante
Raul Frank W 12 Muhammad Said
Robert Frazier W 8 Carlton Holland
Carlos Quintana W Disq. 1 Oscar Delgado
Daniel Dawson W 12 Ian McLeod
Thomas McDonagh W 12 Bradley Pryce
Paul Williams W 10 Luis Hernandez
Anthony Thompson W 8 Jason Naughler
Pablo Navascues KO 4 Andrei Pestriaev
Najal Turpin W 6 Leroy Fountain
Gotthard Hinteregger KO 4 Emanuele Grilli

WELTERWEIGHTS

Zab Judah W 12 Rafael Pineda
Francisco Bojado W 10 Andre Eason
Gianluca Branco KO 4 Nasser Lakrib
Julio Cesar Chavez W 10 Frankie Randall
Miguel Angel Gonzalez W 10
Ernesto Carmona
Hicklet Lau W Disq. 5 Freddy Cruz
Davis Estrada KO 5 Nelson Manchego
Norberto Bravo KO 2 Brad Jensen
Maxim Nesterenko KO 6
Raimundas Petrauskas
Matthew Hatton W 10 Robert Burton
Chad Bennett W 12 Walter Daneff
Sven Paris W 10 Juan Manuel Alaggio
Wayne Martell W 10 Verdell Smith
Dimitriy Salita W 8 Rocky Martinez
Genaro Pellegrini KO 4 John Andre Harris

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Floyd Mayweather W 12 DeMarcus Corley
Miguel Cotto W 12 Lovemore Ndou
Cesar Bazan W 10 Arturo Urena
David Diaz KO 10 Ener Julio
Ernesto Zepeda KO 8 Oscar Tinajero
Bolillo Gonzalez KO 3 Anderson Clayton
Colin Lynes W 12 Pablo Sarmiento
Giuseppe Lauri KO 9 Massimo Bertozzi
Dindo Castanares KO 10 Ramil Caballes
Jose Armando Santa Cruz W 10
James Crayton

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Julio Diaz W 12 Javier Jauregui
(Wins IBF Title)
Isaac Hlatshwayo W 12 Phillip Ndou
Sirimongkol Singmanassak KO 1
Wuli Mutembo
Koji Arisawa W 10 Koji Toyoshima
Michele Delli Paoli Tech. Draw 10
Mikaitai Mutu
Eleazar Contreras W 12 Silverio Ortiz Ley
Juliano Ramos W 10 Moises Pedroza
Jose Cotto KO 1 Luis Lizarraga
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. KO 1 Antonio Aguilar
Mia St. John KO 4 Lana Alexander
Mia St. John KO 3 Melissa Yanas

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Nedal Hussein W Disq. 9
Fernando Saucedo
Michael Gomez KO 2 Justin Juuko
Vicente Mosquera W 12 Edgar Ilarraza
Carl Johanneson KO 6 Andrew Ferrans
Steven Luevano KO 1 Rodrigo Cerda
Fernando Trejo W 8 Darling Jimenez
Pongsith Wiengwiset KO 4 David Douglas
Choi Tsveenpurev W 8 Kevin O'Hara

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Manny Pacquiao D 12
Juan Manuel Marquez
(Retains World Title)
Jorge Lacierva KO 3 Miguel Angel Munguia
Eiichi Sugama D 10 Hector Velazquez
Shoji Kimura W 10 Yokthai Sithoar
Tomas Villa KO 5 Mike Trejo
Sandor Koczak Tech. Draw 5 David Kiilu
Rogers Mtagwa KO 2 Broderick Harper

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Yoddamrong Sithyodthong W 6
Ranee Ganoy
Art Simonyan W 12 Narongrit Pirang
Yober Ortega KO 2 Junichi Watanabe
Manabu Fukushima KO 10 Ho-Sup Noh
Esham Pickering KO 8 Juan Garcia Martin
Ricardo Cordoba W 12 Celestino Caballero
Thomas Mashaba KO 9 Zolani Marali
Pedrito Laurente KO 7 Yuta Nagai

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Ratanachai Vorapin W 12 Cruz Carbajal
Genaro Garcia KO 8 Adonis Rivas
Jhonny Gonzalez KO 6 Alejandro Montiel
Hozumi Hasegawa W 12
Norasing Kietprasanchai
Wladimir Sidorenko W 12 Joseph Agbeko

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Martin Castillo KO 11 Hideyasu Ishihara
Medgoen Singsurat W 12 Jimboy Rodriguez
Simon Ramoni KO 11 Theo Modise
Andrea Sarritzu W 6 Adjib Guessab
Eric Barcelona Tech. Win 8 Sherwin Paro

FLYWEIGHTS

Jose Antonio Aguirre W 10 Jorge Romero
Denburapa Ekarin W 12 Jun Eraham
Koki Kameda KO 1 Saming Twingym

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Victor Burgos KO 6 Fahlan Sakkreerin
(Retains IBF Title)
Pichit Siriwat KO 2 Allan Ranada

STRAWWEIGHTS

Juan Landaeta D 12 Chana Porpaoin
Rodel Mayol Tech. Win 7 Ernesto Rubillar
Junichiro Kaneda KO 5 Genki Ohnaka
Eriberto Gejon KO 3 Jun Ebale

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The RING

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

If there was one fighter in the world you couldn't imagine getting knocked silly inside of two rounds by someone in his own weight division, it was Roy Jones. Be honest: If somebody told you they thought Antonio Tarver was going to knock Jones out in the second round, you'd have laughed at that somebody. It was unthinkable that this could happen. But it did. And that's why this was just about the most open-and-shut case for someone being named Fighter of the Month we can ever remember.

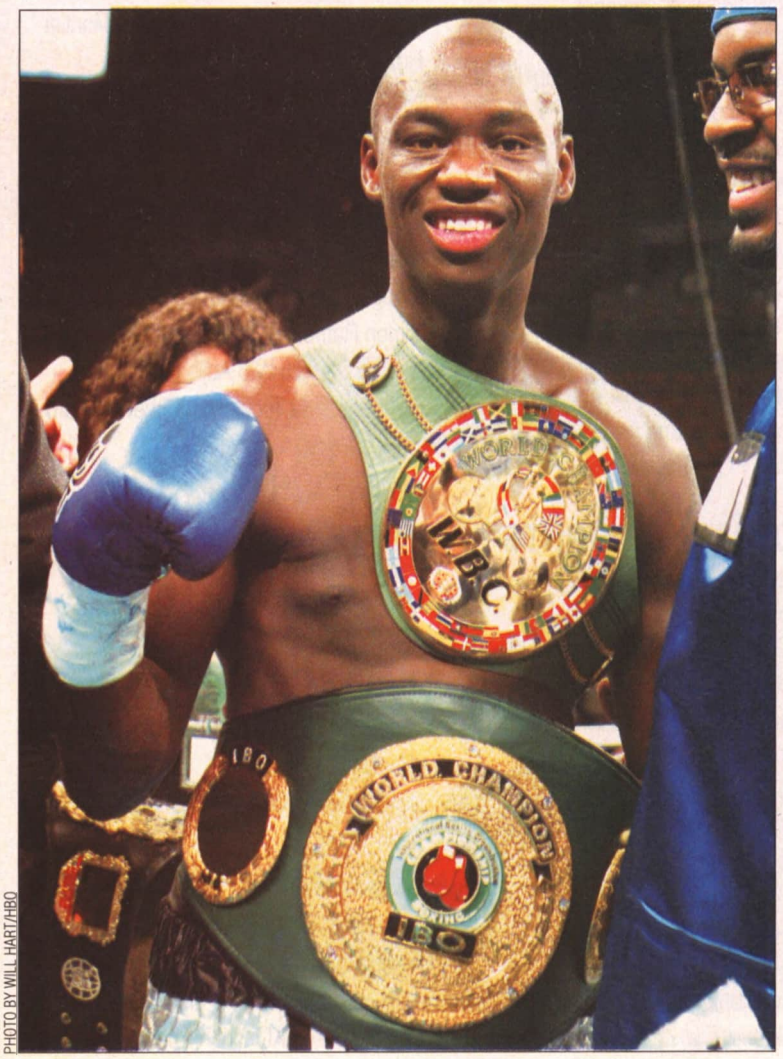

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

The significance of what Tarver achieved cannot be overstated. He took on the man everybody considered the best fighter in the world and knocked him out with one punch. Forty-eight previous opponents had hoped to do the same thing to Jones, but none of them even managed to hurt him. Tarver blew him off his feet and into a semi-conscious state.

Because we'd never seen Jones in a position remotely similar to that, most of us assumed we never would. But with one left hand—one perfect punch—Tarver made the impossible possible. Goodbye, Superman. Hello, Magic Man.

• • • •

Antonio Tarver

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Zab Judah W 12 Rafael Pineda

Las Vegas, Nevada: The good news for Judah is that he jumped right back into action a little more than a month after his narrow loss to welterweight champion Cory Spinks. The bad news is that the best he could manage was a split decision over a 38-year-old opponent whose best work had come more than 10 years ago.

Even being handed the coveted semifinal slot on the Antonio Tarver-Roy Jones II pay-per-view card at the Mandalay Bay failed to inspire Judah, who only fought hard in spurts. When he did, especially in the seventh round, it was all Pineda could do to stay in the fight. But for significant portions of the bout, Judah did next to nothing and allowed his cagey opponent to come dangerously close to handing him his second consecutive defeat.

At first it seemed as if Judah, 147, was going to be way too fast for Pineda. The Brooklyn southpaw opened with a two-fisted flurry, and a quick ending looked imminent. But Pineda, 147, got his left jab going in the second and even managed to follow with a few scoring rights in the third. The Colombian veteran's methodical but technically sound approach was also enabling him to hold his own in the fourth until a late flurry from Judah stole the round.

But just when it seemed like he'd finally gotten his attack in gear, Judah spent most of the fifth laying on the ropes, allowing Pineda to do all the work. The sixth was another pedestrian round for Judah, but he cranked it up again in the seventh, storming out of his corner and launching a rapid-fire assault. He clocked Pineda with some hard shots and had him teetering on several occasions before flooring him with a left to the head. Pineda was still in a fog after beating American referee Norm Budden's count, but Judah couldn't find the punches to finish the job.

A concerted effort by Judah may very well have ended matters in the eighth, but whether by choice or because he lacked the conditioning to fight hard in two successive rounds, the former IBF junior welterweight beltholder took the next three minutes off, which allowed the resilient Pineda to win the session with a late surge.

The pattern continued in the ninth, when Judah's harder punches carried the round. But he did little but hold in the 10th, while Pineda pecked away with his jab. Judah, 31-2 (22), did even less in the 11th, but won the final round, by which time Pineda, 38-6 (31), was too pooped to do much except cross the finish line still on his feet.

Judge Paul Smith scored it 115-112 for Pineda, but was overruled by fellow Nevadans Dick Houck and Patricia Jarman, who voted for Judah by tallies of 114-113 and 115-112, respectively. THE RING saw it even at 114-114.

Judah is hoping for another crack at Spinks, but his showing

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Southpaw Judah bounces a right off Pineda's head

against Pineda certainly won't help sell too many tickets to his next fight, so perhaps Spinks, or more importantly HBO, will look for a more attractive challenger. Antonio Margarito, THE RING's number-one contender, certainly fits that description.

Television: HBO Pay-Per-View, KingVision

Promoters: Don King Production, Square Ring

(5-15-04)

Victor Burgos KO 6 Fahlan Sakkreerin

Las Vegas, Nevada: In his first start since holding world champion Rosendo Alvarez to a draw in December 2003, IBF 108-pound titleholder Burgos made his second successful defense of the alphabet belt by stopping Thai veteran Fahlan at the 1:43 mark of the sixth round on the Tarver-Jones undercard.

The Mandalay Bay Event Center was practically empty when Burgos and Fahlan entered the ring, and late-arriving fans missed seeing the latest example of Burgos' Phoenix-like rise from the ashes of his disastrous start as a pro, when he lost seven of his first 15 bouts, including the first four. The Mexican has run hot and cold throughout his career, but has been fighting better than ever since stopping Alex Sanchez in February '03, and is unbeaten in his last nine outings.

Burgos, 108, began switching from orthodox to southpaw in the first round, which seemed to confuse the left-handed Fahlan, who suffered a cut over his right eye in the second. The injury appeared to spur Fahlan, 107, and he fought on even terms when the action intensified the second half of the round.

After connecting with a couple of clean right hands in the third, Burgos backed off and inexplicably began to clown, giving Fahlan time to recover and paw at his cut. The titleholder got back to serious business in the fourth, only to lose the round when referee Kenny Bayless (USA) ruled what looked like a combination push/trip an official knockdown.

Burgos, 30, upped his work rate in the fifth round, but Fahlan didn't seem hurt and continued to try his best to turn things around. It was, however, a hopeless cause. Burgos opened up in the sixth with a sustained attack and soon dropped Fahlan with a right to the body, followed by a left to the head.

Fahlan beat the count, but Burgos was right back on him, digging hard to the midsection. A series of potent pokes to the belly had the 36-year-old challenger in trouble again, and when Burgos came back upstairs with a left hook, Fahlan crashed down for the second time, prompting Bayless to call a halt to what had suddenly become a very one-sided affair.

The victory improved Burgos' record to 37-13-3 (22) and elevated him to the number-two position in THE RING's junior flyweight rankings. A rematch with Alvarez is probably next. Fahlan slipped to 54-4-2 (23).

Television: HBO Pay-Per-View, KingVision

Promoters: Don King Productions in association with Square Ring

(5-15-04)

Manny Siaca W 12 Anthony Mundine

Sydney, Australia: The prospects for an all-Australian shootout between rivals Mundine and Danny Green for super middleweight supremacy were ruined—at least for the moment—by hard-punching Puerto Rican Siaca, who won a split decision on Mundine's home turf to capture a belt at 168 pounds. When Mundine won the strap two fights earlier, it was a secondary WBA version—Sven Ottke was the "super champ" at the time—but now that Ottke has retired, this bout was for the WBA's only super middle belt. Much more importantly, it changed the landscape of the up-for-grabs super middleweight division and altered the possibilities for crowning a RING world champion.

Siaca's road to this point was an unusual one, as this was his fourth attempt at the WBA super middle title in his last seven fights. He lost a controversial split decision to Bruno Girard in September '00, and when Girard denied him a rematch, the Frenchman was stripped, leaving Siaca and Byron Mitchell to meet for the vacant belt. Siaca led on the scorecards when he was kayoed by Mitchell in the 12th and final round in March '01, but his performance earned him a rematch that September. In the second go-round, Siaca nearly stopped Mitchell in the final round, but Mitchell survived to take a highly controversial

PHOTO BY CHRIS MCGRATH/GETTY IMAGES

Siaca scores a crucial second-round knockdown en route to upset win

split decision. Siaca fought just once in '02 and once in '03 before getting the shot at Mundine at the Sydney Entertainment Center in his first fight of '04.

And it nearly didn't happen, as Mundine sprained his right ankle in training and seriously considered pulling out of the bout. In retrospect, he should have. Whether the ankle injury caused his defeat is subject to debate, but that the Siaca fight negatively impacted his career is not.

The trouble started for Mundine, 167, in the second round, when Siaca, 167¼, dropped him with a left to the head just as the bell sounded. Mundine, 28, scrambled quickly to his feet, where referee Raul Caiz Sr. (USA) completed the eight-count before allowing the defending titlist to return to his corner.

Siaca, 28, continued to be the aggressor after that, pushing the pace. Mundine, meanwhile, tried to use the jab-and-move strategy that allowed him to upset Antwun Echols last September, and he had success with it at times. It wasn't quite enough, however, as Mundine, who had his right ankle taped and grimaced after slipping to the canvas late in the fight, came up just short on the judges' cards after the 12 rounds were completed.

Judge Takeshi Shimakawa (Japan) scored it 114-113 for Mundine, but he was overruled by twin 115-113 cards for Siaca handed in by Mikael Hook (Sweden) and Wangsup Shim (Korea).

"I thought I won, but it was a close fight," said Siaca, 18-4 (16). "He's very fast. I never thought he would be that fast." Siaca indicated he'd be willing to give Mundine a rematch if he wants it.

"What can you do? I have to go back to the drawing board," Mundine, 20-2 (15), said. "I thought I won, but I will take the loss like a man."

With THE RING title at super middleweight vacant, and number-one rated Joe Calzaghe likely to officially abandon the division soon, Siaca and Mundine are poised to move up to numbers one and two, respectively, in the rankings. If this happens, there would obviously be very high stakes indeed in a rematch.

Promoter: Tony Mundine Sr.

(5-5-04)

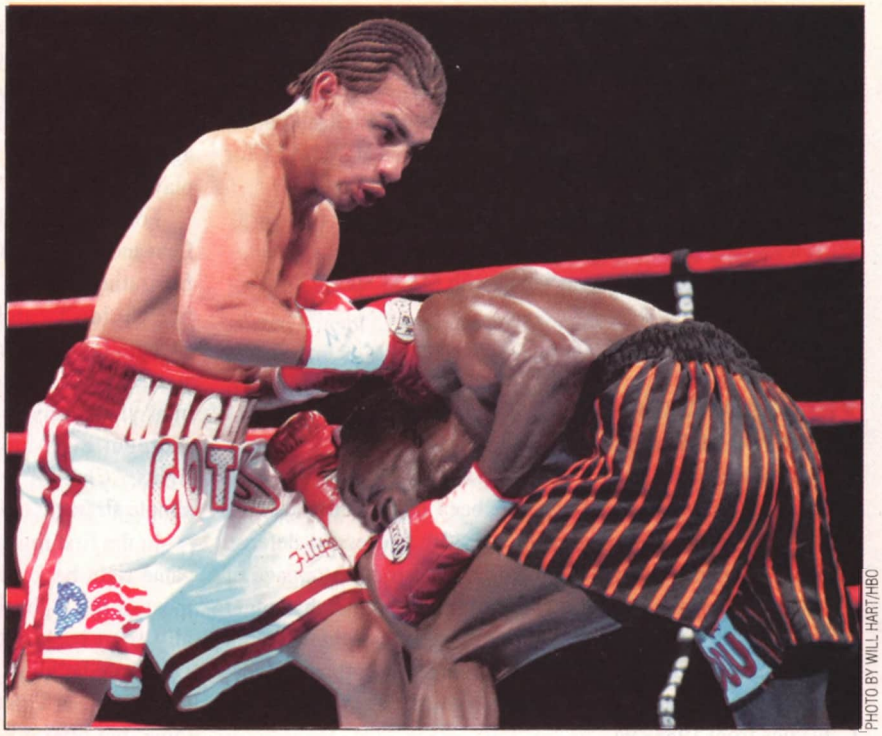

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Cotto goes on the offense as Ndou ducks down

Miguel Cotto W 12 Lovemore Ndou

Las Vegas, Nevada: Touted as the next big star of the junior welterweight division, Cotto, Caguas, Puerto Rico, needed a fight in which to prove his worth. He got the test that was required of him and won a hard-fought unanimous decision over the tough Ndou, Sydney, Australia, by way of Transvaal, South Africa, at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in the co-feature to Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez.

"I believe this was the toughest fight of my career," said Cotto. "He came in good condition to try to beat me, but I'm also in good condition. I learned a lot from this fight and you will see changes in my future fights."

An 11-year pro, Ndou, 37-7-1 (23), had lost a close decision to Sharmba Mitchell in February and showed in that fight that no matter whom he gets into the ring with, he is likely to be there for the distance.

Cotto, 20-0 (16), began the fight using his footwork and landing beautiful short uppercuts to Ndou's head and body. Cotto, 140, had never gone the full 12 rounds before, and he must have sensed early on that he might need to as Ndou, 138, demonstrated his durability, not once showing any signs that there was going to be a stoppage. By the third, Cotto was landing three and four-punch combinations, but Ndou kept coming back and was able to land uppercuts when Cotto was in close.

The fourth through eighth rounds were close, as Cotto, 23, tried to draw Ndou, 32, onto his accurate left uppercut. It looked as though Ndou wanted to get close so that he could land his overhand right, and when he did, he rocked Cotto's head back.

In the ninth and 10th, Ndou was forcing Cotto to fight, and they stood and traded toe-to-toe, but the more skilled fighter was Cotto. In the last two rounds, Ndou piled on more pressure, and Cotto's face started to show the marks of a tough battle.

Three right hands at the beginning of round 12 from Ndou were enough to get Cotto on the back foot. Cotto boxed beautifully, throwing short punches, and with only five seconds to go in the bout—and for what seemed to be the first time in the fight—Cotto pinned Ndou in the corner and unloaded a combination of about 17 punches as the 7,129 fans stood on their feet in appreciation of an entertaining fight.

Cotto showed that he has the chin, skills, and desire to become a world champion, and he will next headline a card on September 11 in his native Puerto Rico. Cotto said, "I was

never really hurt by Ndou. Sometimes you can't kayo your opponent, so you have to move around and use your skills."

Judge Glen Trowbridge (USA) scored the fight 117-111, Dalby Shirley (USA) saw it 115-113, and Carol Castellano (USA) had it 116-112, all for Cotto. THE RING scored it 115-113 for Cotto.

The referee was Tony Weeks (USA).

Television: HBO

Promoter: Top Rank in association with M&M Sports

(5-8-04)

Wayne McCullough

Veerapol Sahaprom KO 12 Julio Cesar Avila

Nongkhai, Thailand: Boxing's second-longest-reigning titleholder (now that Roy Jones has been dethroned and Sven Ottke has retired), Veerapol made his 13th successful defense of the WBC bantamweight strap with a final-round stoppage of Mexican journeyman Avila, a game but undeserving challenger who had lost his previous two bouts. The 35-year-old Veerapol scored two knockdowns en route to moving within three defenses of the bantamweight division record, set by Orlando Canizales from 1988-'94.

The Veerapol-Avila fight was part of a celebration for the 10th anniversary of the unveiling of the Thai-Lao Friendship bridge, which links Nongkhai with Vientiane, the capital of Laos. But there was little friendship shown by Veerapol, who dished out a comprehensive beating in front of his countrymen. Though Avila, 118, boxed well the first two rounds, Veerapol, 118, took command in the third by dropping the Mexican with a right uppercut to the stomach.

The titlist's body attack continued to weaken the 27-year-old Avila as the rounds wore on, but Veerapol strayed low with a shot in the eighth, allowing Avila a five-minute respite. Referee David Chung (Korea) took a point from Veerapol, but it was clearly going to be inconsequential. The Thailander dropped Avila, 21-16-1 (9), again in the 10th, and in the 12th, the challenger's corner wisely threw in the towel as the one-sided beating intensified.

It was unknown as of press time what would be next for Veerapol, 43-1-2 (30), but hopefully his next few opponents will be significantly more capable. Otherwise, reaching Canizales' mark won't mean much.

(5-1-04)

Julio Diaz W 12 Javier Jauregui

San Diego, California: Admit it: After Diaz got brutally bumped off in a single round by Juan Valenzuela back in April '02, you wrote him off. We all did. Sure, he was young enough (22, at the time) to come back, but it just didn't look likely after the way he was violently put to sleep along the ropes by a single left hand. At the very least, if it was going to happen, it was going to take a long time. Or so we all thought.

Just two years later, Diaz, 24, is all the way back and a significant player in the lightweight division after putting on a near flawless boxing display to wrest the IBF 135-pound title from the streaking Jauregui. The quicker, slicker Diaz outfoxed his Mexican foe at nearly every turn, winning a majority decision that would have and should have been unanimous if not for one incomprehensible scorecard. Coming on the heels of an impressive knockout of then-top-10-rated Courtney Burton, Diaz is again showing the world championship potential he had displayed prior to the Valenzuela disaster.

For Jauregui, 134¾, making his first defense since stopping Leavander Johnson for the vacant IBF belt, it was a long and frustrating night at the San Diego Sports Arena. He tried hard but couldn't catch up with his younger foe. Diaz, 134¼, Coachella, California, frequently switched from his orthodox stance to a southpaw posture, and though "The Kid" rendered himself offensively impotent when he turned lefty, he rendered Jauregui even more offensively impotent. A veteran of 60 fights, "Chatito" was surprisingly befuddled by his opponent's simple strategic twist.

In the first round, Jauregui landed a sharp left-right, but Diaz came right back with two hard hooks. This was the way it was most of the night: If Jauregui got any business done, Diaz usually fired back with something just as strong if not stronger. Diaz was building momentum in the second before a delay to fix a problem with the ropes slowed matters at the start of round three, but after a wait of about 10 minutes, the action resumed and Diaz settled right into a groove. His jab was piling up points, and his footwork was making Jauregui's stalking nearly useless. At the end of the fifth, a flush left hook from Diaz shook the 30-year-old Jauregui.

Jauregui, 47-11-2 (34), missed one wild punch after another over the next few rounds, but in the 10th, he finally connected with a good right hand and followed up well. He never appeared to hurt Diaz, however, and for the last two rounds, the Californian averted danger. When the bell rang, Diaz, 30-2 (22), was ecstatic, and deservedly so. He'd put the Valenzuela loss behind him, once and for all.

Somehow, judge Rafael Lopez (Mexico) scored it 114-114 (it was initially announced incorrectly as an even more ridicu-

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Diaz celebrates surprisingly easy win

lous 117-117), but his inept card was thankful overruled by matching scores of 118-110 from Chuck Hassett (USA) and Lou Filippo (USA). THE RING had Diaz prevailing 118-111.

Television: HBO Latino

Promoter: Golden Boy Promotions

(5-13-04)

Martin Castillo KO 11 Hideyasu Ishihara

Gifu, Japan: Trailing on points, fading and frustrated favorite Castillo, 114¾, Mexico, acquired a minor junior bantamweight belt with a come-from-behind stoppage of aggressive Japanese lefty Ishihara, 115, dropping him so badly with a well-timed right that the referee stopped counting and declared a halt at 2:41 of the 11th round. After the 10th, judge Ove Ovesen (Denmark) had Ishihara up 97-93, Henk Meijers (Netherland) had it 96-94 for Ishihara, and Ferdinand Estrella (Philippines) saw it 97-93 for Castillo.

Ishihara let loose with fireworks from the outset, but Castillo, a year his junior at 27, calmly responded with more accurate combinations to the belly and the face, winning the first round. Though the Japanese lefty took the third with his aggressiveness, the Mexican was in command in the second and fourth by displaying his technical superiority, despite sustaining a slight gash over the right eyebrow that was promptly stopped by veteran cutman Miguel Diaz.

The fight turned in the fifth, as Castillo began retreating in the face of the taller Ishihara's rough-and-tumble aggression. Ishihara, piloted by well-reputed Korean trainer Waryon Yuh, dominated the fight from round five to round eight, often pinning Castillo to the ropes with flurries of punches. Castillo, whose speed and zip appeared gone, desperately took back a point with some accurate combos in the ninth. The 10th, however, was won by Ishihara, putting Castillo in a hole heading into the "championship rounds."

Ishihara became a bit careless in the 11th, though, and took a short but very sharp right hand to the chin that sent him down. Struggling to raise himself and resume fighting, he fell twice before Thai referee Pinit Prayadsab mercifully stopped counting and called a halt. Ishihara, 15-3-1 (11), stayed prone on the canvas for minutes. Had he utilized his southpaw jabs to keep his distance in the last two rounds, Ishihara was on track to escape with a victory. But the night ultimately belonged to Castillo, 26-1 (16), who claimed an interim title from the WBA—an organization ever eager to collect extra sanctioning fees while its 115-pound titleholder Alexander Munoz recovers from injuries.

Promoter: Matsuda Promotions

(5-16-04)

Joe Koizumi

Rocky Juarez W 10 Joe Morales

Houston, Texas: Juarez' status as a fighter who had never been knocked down (in 162 amateur and 19 pro fights) disappeared when heavy underdog Morales decked him in the second round. But Juarez didn't let the "zero" at the end of his record disappear, surviving the minor scare and pounding out a 10-round unanimous decision victory in front of approximately 1,500 hometown fans at the Reliant Center.

Typically a slow starter, Juarez, 127½, fought defensively for the first two rounds, allowing Morales, 127, San Antonio, Texas, to deploy an effective stick-and-move game plan that kept him at bay. Early in the second round, Morales fired a straight right behind a jab that caught Juarez on the jawbone and dropped him—along with the lower jaws of all in attendance.

"The punch caught me," Juarez said. "I never saw the punch. Surprisingly, he only has four knockouts. He's a solid puncher, not so much a hard hitter, but just very solid. I think it's a learning experience that I've got to take. It was going to happen sooner or later."

Juarez, 24, seemed slightly dazed and embarrassed as he listened to referee Robert Gonzalez' count on his knee before standing up at eight. Morales dictated the action for the rest of the round by sharp shooting with straight punches from a distance, but he never pounced on Juarez with any urgency or bad intentions.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Ref Prayadsab counts over Ishihara as Castillo looks on

"It might have been just a flash knockdown," Morales, 29, said. "I wasn't going to jump on him just because he got caught cold. It might have just woken him up."

The knockdown was in fact a wakeup call, as Juarez finally began to let his fists fly in the third round, turning the tide with chopping left hooks and lead overhand rights. Morales punched back with gusto, but it quickly became clear that Juarez had the superior firepower as he began imposing his will on a backpedaling Morales.

Having found his punching range, Juarez controlled rounds four through seven utilizing a combination of patience and pressure to systematically break Morales down. The outgunned Morales stubbornly refused to fold, though. Using zippy lateral footwork and jitterbugging head movement, Morales rarely allowed Juarez to land more than one or two punches at a time. He made Juarez pay for missing with sneaky counterpunches, but they were of the slapping variety and lacked the pop to discourage Juarez from pressing his assault.

Hoping to close the show, Juarez, 20-0 (14), mounted a fierce rally in the eighth round and repeatedly rocked Morales with compact left hooks. Morales' sturdy chin, coupled with his defensive savvy, allowed him to survive the onslaught, but he fought the final two rounds primarily in survival mode as Juarez continued to pursue.

"I never caught him well, I caught him with glancing shots," Juarez said. "He's real durable and real awkward. The fact that he's never really been stopped shows that he can take a punch and also give a punch. I really wanted to knock him out, but I've got to take the win however it comes, so I can't really be disappointed."

All three Texas judges, Gale Van Hoy, Robert Bish, and Lee McCowan, scored the fight 97-92 for Juarez, as did THE RING.

Morales, 19-8 (4), whose only stoppage loss was due to cuts against Joel Casamayor in a 2001 bid for the WBA super featherweight belt, said he won at least half the rounds and deserved the verdict on account of the knockdown. Morales also questioned Juarez' readiness to fight at the elite level of the featherweight division.

"I was just a guy who was 19-7," he said. "Imagine if he fights somebody with a good punch and a better record or a better kill ratio. I only have four knockouts."

Promoter: Main Events
(4-24-04)
Television: NBC
Peter Lim

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Ashira crumbles in bogus title fight with Masoe

Maselino Masoe KO 2 Evans Ashira

Miami, Florida: The continuing cheapening of the alphabet belts may have reached a new low with Masoe claiming the vacant WBA middleweight belt in a bout so meaningless and unmarketable, it boggles the mind that Showtime paid for it. It was disturbing and indefensible enough when the Venezuela-based jokers tried to tell us that both Bernard Hopkins and William Joppy were WBA middleweight "champions," but are we now supposed to accept the untested 37-year-old Masoe as some sort of equal to Hopkins? If so, then maybe we should accept the WBA as the equal of the IBC, the WBF, or any other ridiculous group that, for good reason, can't gain a foothold.

This is not to say that Masoe is a shamefully bad fighter or that his second-round knockout of the equally anonymous Ashira wasn't impressive. It's just that Showtime has a reputation for seeking out more meaningful fights involving more significant fighters, as opposed to televising the kind of contest that would be right at home as a co-feature on Fox SportsNet.

Whatever the circumstances, New Zealand-based Samoan Masoe, 158½, did his best to come across as a middleweight version of David Tua, hurting 34-year-old Kenyan Ashira, 159, with nearly every punch he landed. Masoe was the more compact puncher, and a stiff right late in round one sent Ashira wobbling backward. Two good left hooks then had Ashira barely able to stand, and finally a heavy right hand put him on the deck with just seconds remaining in the round. The Kenyan beat the count of referee Tommy Kimmons (USA), and was immediately saved by the bell.

The salvation was short-lived, however. Twenty seconds into the second round, a hard right to the head from Masoe dropped Ashira, 23-1 (13), to a knee. He popped up quickly, but after taking an eight-count, he was met with a sweeping left hook that dropped him yet again. Kimmons waved it off without a count at 44 seconds of the round, making Masoe, 26-2 (25), one of boxing's growing number of fringe contenders masquerading as so-called "champions."

Promoter: Don King Productions
(5-1-04) ■

New Face

(Continued from page 22)

one in my class," Kaddour said. "Other kids used to tell me I wasn't going to be s___. They'd call me nigger. I was very shy and I didn't speak the language very well. I was scared to say things, because I was afraid I wouldn't say them right, but when we took tests at the end of the year, I would always do well. The other kids would get jealous of me."

And pick fights. Kaddour was in detention almost every day. He found he had lightning-quick hands, and no fear of using them. He did, however, fear his father finding out about his use of them. Kaddour's father, Fami, was a stern man and an arms dealer in Lebanon, who saw his share of real combat.

"Every time I got a letter from a teacher and I was supposed to give it to my parents, I signed the letter instead," Kaddour said, laughing. "I knew if I told my father, he would go down to the school and raise hell. He killed people, he was in war. He didn't care. Even now, when I go to places where my father used to be, they tell me my father was a very, very strong man. If I was ever scared to fight a kid, and if my father found out, he would beat the hell out of me. He didn't want me to run away, even if I got the hell beat out of me. I had to be a man.

"One time, these two bigger, older guys were pushing my brother around and trying to take his soccer ball away from him. I jumped out of the window of a first-floor classroom, and punched one of the kids and broke his jaw. The kid couldn't eat for a month. The police came to my home, and I got kicked out of the school."

It was a little while after that incident that Kaddour discovered boxing. He played for a club soccer team that wasn't very good. In fact, they always lost, leaving Kaddour with an angry feeling. So Kaddour reacted the only way he knew how—he fought. One day, a trainer by the name of Jan Theillemann saw him fighting in the street after one of his games.

"He asked me to come to the gym the next day," said Kaddour, who also speaks Arabic and German, in addition to English and Danish. "It's kind of funny now, because I'm actually afraid to fight in the street now. I'm nice now, but when I was young, I was mean. But I've grown up and I know how to handle situations. But when I was younger, I would just hit them. I wanted to prove I was a man."

That attitude bore through when Babyface began competing at the amateur level. He was a six-time Danish champion, ranging in weight from 130 to 147 pounds. He rung up a highly impressive 81-3 record, and had hopes of competing for the Danish 2000 Olympic team in Sydney, Australia.

"They didn't treat me right," Kaddour said. "I won all the amateur tournaments in Denmark, but the Danish Olympic Committee selected an older guy because they felt he had more experience than me. I had to turn pro right after that. I was pissed off."

So Kaddour left the amateur ranks, and is now undefeated as a pro. He is promoted by Danish promoter Steffen Tangstad and managed by Houston, Texas-based rap impresario James Prince.

"Ahmed is fantastic," said Brian Mathiasen, Kaddour's Danish trainer. "In Denmark, there are 50, maybe 60 pro fighters, and it's been some time since Denmark has had a fighter like Ahmed. You have to go back I think about 20 years to find someone as talented at Ahmed. He does everything well.

"The only mistake I see him doing now is that he works at too high a tempo. In my opinion, he wants to show everything in one round, and that could be a problem for him against an experienced opponent who will wait. He's very fast and he's very clever, and he can hit all of the punches from all angles. I'd like to see him use the ring and go sideways, instead of going forward all of the time. Then again, he's a young man and he wants to show everything at one time. He's boxed well, but he has to be careful with pushing forward all of the time."

Pushing forward aggressively certainly didn't hurt Kaddour on April 24 in Los Angeles, when he attracted the attention of the media and assorted HBO folks in attendance by impressively knocking out Juan Carlos Garcia in four rounds on the Vitali Klitschko-Corrie Sanders undercard.

"Kaddour has everything and he knows there were some big guys looking at him in Los Angeles; people were watching," Mathiasen said. "He wants to go to the top in United States and he wants to be number one in the world. He just has to take his time and learn a lesson. But he has the eyes, the talent, the perfect body."

Not bad for a kid who didn't have much of a chance to live. ■

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Kaddour attacks Garcia in an eye-opening performance in Los Angeles

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Dec. 1987: Mike Tyson: Undisputed Heavyweight King—But Is He Losing His Loyal Subjects? Color Pinup: Matthew Hilton. Interview: Barry McGuigan. Also: Aaron Pryor, Mike McCallum.

Jan. 1988: The Collapse Of A Hero: Why Breland Never Hit The Mark Of Greatness. Color Pinup: Michael Spinks. Interview: Aaron Pryor. Also: Michael Nunn, Alexis Arguello, lightweights.

Feb. 1988: Pazienza & Haugen Go For Each Other's Throats. Color Pinup: Marlon Starling. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Tate-Olajide, ESPN Boxing.

May 1988: *KO* Exclusive—Mike Tyson, As Only Mike Tyson Knows Him. Color Pinup: Mike McCallum. Interview: Thomas Hearns. Also: Tyson-Spinks poll, Michael Dokes, Virgil Hill.

July 1988: Superfight History Dictates: Don't Expect The Expected From Tyson-Spinks. Color Pinup: Roger Mayweather. Interview: Dr. Ferdie Pacheco. Also: Roberto Duran, Azumah Nelson, Barkley-Olajide.

Aug. 1988: Tyson-Spinks: *KO*'s Fearless Forecast Of Superfight '88. Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Matthew Hilton. Also: Lockridge-Knight, Evander Holyfield, Lloyd Honeyghan.

Sept. 1988: Tyson-Spinks, The Aftermath—What If Tyson Wins; What If Spinks Wins? Color Pinup: Frank Tate. Interview: Marlon Starling. Also: Barry McGuigan, Simon Brown, risk-taking.

Oct. 1988: Middleweight Terrorism: Iran Bombs The Hit Man. Color Pinup: Don Lalonde. Interview: Frank Bruno. Also: Roger Mayweather, Marvin Hagler.

Dec. 1988: Sugar Ray's Comeback: Why? Color Pinup: Simon Brown. Interview: Kevin Rooney. Also: Michael Nunn, best fighter poll, welterweight wars.

Jan. 1989: The Troubled Times Of Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Lloyd Honeyghan. Interview: Gil Clancy. Also: Meldrick Taylor, Jeff Fenech, Boxing's Champs.

Feb. 1989: George Foreman Is Born Again. Color Pinup: Meldrick Taylor. Interview: Bill Cayton. Also: The Olympics, Davey Hilton, John Mugabi, Barry McGuigan.

Aug. 1989: Special 100th Issue. Color Pinup: Hagler vs. Hearns. Also: The *KO* Years, 50 most influential people, '80s ratings, best of *KO* Interview, year-by-year review, Sugar Ray Robinson.

Sept. 1989: "I Beat Up Tyson Before, I'll Do It Again," by Carl Williams. Color Pinup: Michael Nunn. Also: Chavez-Mayweather, Brian Mitchell, Marv Albert.

Feb. 1990: George Foreman Risks A Multimillion-Dollar Shot At Tyson. Color Pinup: Brian Mitchell. Interview: Riddick Bowe. Also: Simon Brown, Molina-Lopez, East vs. West.

June 1990: A Sugar-Free Future? Thomas Hearns Is Looking Up. Color Pinup: Glenn McCrory. Interview: Michael Moorer. Also: Matthew Hilton, Molina-Suarez, Foreman-Cooney, Camacho-Paz.

July 1990: *KO* Interview—Sugar Ray Leonard. Color Pinup: Jorge Paez. Also: Michael Nunn, Buster Douglas, Jibaro Perez, the Olympians.

Aug. 1990: Meldrick Taylor: Brilliance In Defeat. Color Pinup: Buster Douglas. Interview: Teddy Atlas. Also: Buddy McGirt, Dokes-Ruddock, Simon Brown.

Sept. 1990: *KO* Interview—Buster Douglas. Color Pinup: Macho Camacho. Also: Thomas Hearns, Nigel Benn, Greg Haugen, Boxing Hall of Fame.

Oct. 1990: Send In The Clown: Is Jorge Paez A Phenom Or A Fraud? Color Pinup: Paul Banke. Interview: Tony Lopez. Also: Chavez-Taylor II, Jesse Benavides.

Nov. 1990: The Comeback Of Mike Tyson: A Crooked Course Straight To The Top. Color Pinup: Tony Lopez. Interview: Don Dunphy. Also: Davis-Breland, Riddick Bowe, federal commission.

Dec. 1990: The Heart Of The Matter: Who Will Survive The Holyfield-Douglas War? Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Virgil Hill. Also: Michael Carbajal, Ruelas Brothers, best fighter poll.

Jan. 1991: Macho Ado About Nothing? Why Hector Camacho Wants To Be Believed. Color Pinup: Meldrick Taylor. Interview: Irving Rudd. Also: Sugar Ray Leonard, Orlando Canizales, Vinny Pazienza.

Feb. 1991: 10 Fighters To Fear: Boxing's Most Destructive Hitters. Color Pinup: Razor Ruddock. Interview: Ray Mercer. Also: Roberto Duran, Saoul Mamby, Mills Lane, Sugar Ray Robinson.

May 1991: Ruddock Eyes The Big Upset Of Tyson. Color Pinup: Luisito Espinosa. Interview: Jeff Fenech. Also: Virgil Hill, Pernell Whitaker, Alex Ramos, Simon Brown, Buddy McGirt.

June 1991: Exclusive *KO* Interview: Evander Holyfield. Color Pinup: Raul Perez. Also: Norris-Leonard, Charles Williams, champs of 1971 vs. 1991, J.C. Chavez.

July 1991: Riddick Bowe: Is He Destined To Be Heavyweight Champ? Color Pinup: Michael Carbajal. Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Bobby Czyz, Buster Douglas, Mark Breland.

Aug. 1991: Desert Storm II: Will The Tyson-Ruddock Rematch Be Different? Color Pinup: Loreto Garza. Interview: Michael Carbajal. Also: Brown-Blocker, Fenech-Nelson preview, Harold Brazier, Yuh-Carbajal.

Sept. 1991: Remember Me? I Won The Fight! What "The Real Deal" Still Has To Deal With. Color Pinup: Ray Mercer. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Larry Holmes, southpaw heavyweights, Toney-Nunn, Brown-Taylor.

Oct. 1991: Thomas Hearns Works Another Miracle! Now There Are More Hills Left To Climb. Color Pinup: Humberto Gonzalez. Interview: Mike McCallum. Also: Norris-Curry, Richard Steele, Troy Dorsey.

Nov. 1991: Mike Tyson—The Only Heavyweight That Matters. Color Pinup: Thomas Hearns. Interview: Troy Dorsey. Also: Fenech-Nelson, James Toney, bodypunching.

Dec. 1991: Tyson vs. Holyfield—The Experts Analyze The Elements That Will Decide The Fight. Color Pinup: Joey Gamache. Also: Michael Moorer, Pernell Whitaker, Greg Richardson, Robert Quiroga.

Jan. 1992: The Tyson-Holyfield Showdown: An Exclusive Forecast By George Foreman. Color Pinup: Myung Woo Yuh. Also: Fenech-Nelson, TV announcers, boxing's toughest men, Toney-McCallum.

March 1992: *KO* Interview Mike Tyson: An In-Depth, Toe-To-Toe Talk With Boxing's Biggest Star. Color Pinup: Michael Moorer. Also: Thomas Hearns, Tracy Patterson, Larry Holmes, best fighter poll.

May 1992: Division-By-Division Faceoffs: The Best Of '92 vs. The Best Of '67. Color Pinup: James Warring. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Tommy Morrison, Bert Cooper, Gianfranco Rosi.

June 1992: If Not Tyson Or Holyfield, Then Who? Bowe? Moorer? Ruddock? Lewis? Mercer? Color Pinup: James Toney. Interview: Shelly Finkel. Also: Scotty Olson, overrated and underrated fighters, Orlin Norris, Whitaker-Pineda.

July 1992: The Title Reign of Evander Holyfield: A Reason To Hide ... Or A Reason For Pride? Color Pinup: Buddy McGirt. Interview: Julian Jackson. Also: Kelley-Dorsey, Nelson-Fenech, Kennedy McKinney.

Aug. 1992: Bowe Knows The Big Fight: The Top Contender Analyzes Holmes-Holyfield. Color Pinup: Julian Jackson. Interview: Michael Spinks. Also: Thomas Hearns, Blue Horizon, fighting fear, Toney-Barkley, Greg Haugen.

Sept. 1992: Can Tommy Morrison Punch Out The Theory ... White Men Can't Fight. Color Pinup: Welcome Ncita. Interview: Ken Norton. Also: Reggie Johnson, Jimmy Paul, McGirt-Blocker, Ali-Shavers.

Oct. 1992: The Olympics: Golden Memories ... And Golden Futures? Color Pinup: Reggie Johnson. Interview: Bobby Czyz. Also: Genaro Hernandez, Terry Norris.

Nov. 1992: Foreman vs. Holmes: The Fight Evander Holyfield Should Have Prevented. Color Pinup: Iran Barkley. Interview: Joey Gamache. Also: Hector Camacho, Tracy Patterson, Rudy Zavala.

Dec. 1992: The Final Four: Ruddock vs. Lewis, Holyfield vs. Bowe. Color Pinup: Genaro Hernandez. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Also: Whitaker-Pineda, Bowe-Coetzer, Alex Stewart, Gamache-Lopez.

Jan. 1993: Holyfield vs. Bowe: Who Will Win And Why. Color Pinup: Al Cole. Interview: Vinny Pazienza. Also: James Toney, Terrence Alli, Maurice Blocker.

Feb. 1993: Strictly Business: George Foreman Fights For The Love Of It—The Money! Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: George Benton. Also: Tracy Spann, Oba Carr, greatest eras.

March 1993: Not Just Another English Muffin: Lennox Lewis Powers His Way Toward The Title. Color Pinup: Leeonzer Barber. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Reggie Johnson, Lopez-Gamache, USA Network.

May 1993: Recapping The Future: Julio Cesar Chavez' Road To 100-0. Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Junior Jones. Also: Buddy McGirt, Riddick Bowe, Raul Marquez.

Dec. 1993: The *KO* Feud Rages On: "I Will Torture You!" Says Riddick Bowe To Lennox Lewis. Color Pinup: Kennedy McKinney. Also: Mississippi boxing, George Foreman, Yori Boy Campas , Carbajal-Kim, Morrison-Moorer.

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June 1996: Destined For The Hall Of Fame: Who's In, Who's Out. Color Pinup: Wayne McCullough. Interview: Cedric Kushner. Also: Danny Romero, Mark Breland, Dynamite Dozen—the next 12.

Sept. 1996: Tyson vs. Seldon. Don't Bet On This Fight Until You've Read This Story! Color Pinup: Arturo Gatti. Interview: Butterbean. Also: Dana Rosenblatt, '92 Olympians, McGuigan-Pedroza.

Nov. 1996 (Special 88-Page Edition): The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Terry Norris. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Roy Jones, Roberto Duran, Joe Cortez.

Dec. 1996: Andrew Golota—Taking The Low Road to Stardom. Color Pinup: Mark Johnson. Interview: Rock Newman. Also: De La Hoya-Gonzalez, Chuck Bodak, bizarre endings, Chavez-Rosario.

Winter 1996: This Is War! Holyfield-Tyson Will Be Explosive ... And Short. Color Pinup: Roy Jones. Interview: Bernard Hopkins. Also: Riddick Bowe, David Reid, Holyfield-Qawi.

Jan. 1997 (Special 88-Page Edition): Bowe-Golota II: Hatred And Vengeance ... It's A Beautiful Thing! Color Pinup: Johnny Tapia. Interview: Lou Duva. Also: Mouse Strauss, heavyweight rematches, Azumah Nelson.

Feb. 1997: *KO*'s 1997 Wish List. Color Pinup: Ike Quartey. Interview: Naseem Hamed. Also: David Tua, Felix Trinidad, Adolpho Washington, Bobby Czyz.

March 1997: Holyfield's Trainer Tells All! An Inside Look At The Upset Of The Year. Color Pinup: Vinny Pazienza. Interview: Sugar Ray Leonard. Also: George Foreman, Lupe Pintor, boxing bill, Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Aug. 1997: Oscar Reaches … But Can't Grasp The Stars. Color Pinup: Nate Miller. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Norris-Trinidad preview, Hall of Fame, Angel Manfredy.

Sept. 1997: A Legitimate Grudge Match! Why Romero-Tapia Could Be The Fight Of The Year. Color Pinup: Oscar De La Hoya. Interview: David Tua. Also: Ike Quartey, George Foreman, top promoters.

Nov. 1997: Filling In The Missing Pieces: What "The Bite" Means To Boxing. Color Pinup: Christy Martin. Interview: Jim Lampley. Also: Vince Phillips, British prospects, Iran Barkley.

Dec. 1997: Johnny Tapia Outshines Danny Romero: The Defining Moment In A "Crazy Life." Color Pinup: Genaro Hernandez. Interview: Frans Botha. Also: Lewis-Akiwande, Don King, Charles Brewer.

Holiday 1997 (Special 88-Page Edition): Holyfield-Moorer II: Can Evander Avenge His Ugliest Defeat? Color Pinup: Vince Phillips. Interview: Mills Lane. Also: Roy Jones, Baby Jake Matlala, Boxing 2000.

Jan. 1998: De La Hoya Humbles The Macho Man: "Oscar's The Best I've Ever Fought." Color Pinup: William Guthrie. Interview: Mark Johnson. Also: Johnny Tapia, Pinklon Thomas, defense.

Feb. 1998: Is Lennox Lewis The World's Best Heavyweight? Color Pinup: Charles Brewer. Interview: Marc Ratner. Also: Otis Grant, Arturo Gatti.

March 1998: Evander Holyfield: For The Real Deal, Lewis Is No Big Deal. Color Pinup: Lou Del Valle. Interview: Lennox Lewis. Also: David Izon, Meldrick Taylor, rapid weight loss.

May 1998: Living Up To The Hype: Sometimes They Do … Sometimes They Don't. Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Best Of … (Part III). Also: Naseem Hamed, Marty Denkin, women's boxing.

June 1998: Lewis vs. Holyfield: Why The Fight Of The Year Isn't Going To Happen. Color Pinup: Evander Holyfield. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Hector Lizarraga, pain, Head-To-Head review.

Aug. 1998: Lewis Bombs Out Briggs: Would The WBC Champ Do This To Holyfield? Color Pinup: Keith Mullings. Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Pernell Whitaker, Marco Antonio Barrera, Roberto Garcia.

Sept. 1998: Can Mike Tyson Make A Successful Comeback? Sugar Ray Leonard Has The Answer. Color Pinup: Michael Grant. Interview: Brad Jacobs. Also: Naseem Hamed, Wayne McCullough, Kirk Johnson.

Oct. 1998: The Ultimate Fantasy Card. Color Pinup: Oscar De La Hoya. Interview: Roy Jones. Also: Brendan Ingle, NYPD boxing, prospect blueprint.

Nov. 1998 The *KO* 100. Color Pinup: Reggie Johnson. Interview: Tim Austin. Also: Cesar Bazan, Spencer Oliver, Bobby Czyz.

Dec. 1998: Winning Fights Is Easier Than Winning Fans: Why Can't We Appreciate Roy Jones? Color Pinup: Tim Austin. Interview: Michael Grant. Also: Christy Martin, Ali Reform Act, one-hit wonders.

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Feb. 1999: Holyfield & Lewis: Did They Hurt Themselves Before They Could Hurt Each Other? Color Pinup: Andrew Golota. Interview: Angel Manfredy. Also: Mismatches, Bobby Czyz on watching fights.

March 1999: Exposed! Is Hamed Really Hector Camacho In Disguise? Color Pinup: Mike Tyson. Interview: Joe Frazier. Also: Zab Judah, Vuyani Bungu, Frankie Randall.

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Aug. 1999: Lewis vs. Holyfield II: Should We Expect Anything Different Next Time? Color Pinup: Fernando Vargas. Interview: David Reid. Also: Ibeabuchi-Byrd, Melissa Salamone.

Sept. 1999: Mayweather vs. Mosley: Who's The Future Of Boxing? Color Pinup: James Page. Interview: J Russell Peltz. Also: Evander Holyfield, Thomas Hearns, Angel Manfredy.

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Nov. 1999: De La Hoya vs. Trinidad: "It's Gonna Come Down To Who The Hell Wants It Most!" Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Arturo Gatti. Also: Roy Jones, Sugar Shane Mosley, Vassily Jirov.

Dec. 1999: David Reid & Fernando Vargas: Olympic Teammates On A Collision Course! Color Pinup: Zab Judah. Interview: Ike Ibeabuchi. Also: Vitali Klitschko, Antonio Tarver, Mike Tyson.

Holiday 1999 (Special 88-Page Edition): Lewis-Holyfield II: Why We Demand A Knockout! Color Pinup: Sharmba Mitchell. Interview: Paulie Ayala. Also: James Toney, James Page & Terronn Millett, decade review.

Jan. 2000: Fool's Gold? Trinidad May Have Tarnished Oscar's Image Forever! Color Pinup: Paulie Ayala. Interview: Tony Ayala Jr. Also: David Reid, Johnny Nelson.

Feb. 2000: Breakout 2000: Who's Going To Lead The Way In Y2K? Color Pinup: Roy Jones. Interview: Bob Arum. Also: Shane Mosley, Wise-Chavez, Iran Barkley.

March 2000: Mike Tyson: "I'm Tired Of This Crap!" So Are We, Mike! Color Pinup: Vernon Forrest. Interview: James Page. Also: Erik Morales & Naseem Hamed, Diego Corrales, women's boxing.

May 2000: Michael Grant vs. Lennox Lewis—25 Insiders Pick The Winner. Color Pinup: Paul Spadafora. Interview: Dan Goossen. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Johnny Tapia, southpaws.

June 2000: Lewis vs. Grant: Who Will Win … And Why. Color Pinup: Vitali Klitschko. Interview: Sharmba Mitchell. Also: Shane Mosley, David Izon, 2000 Hall of Fame.

July 2000: Today's Fighters, Tomorrow's Hall Of Famers. Color Pinup: Keith Holmes. Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Zab Judah, Morales-Barrera, Wayne Braithwaite.

Aug. 2000: Mosley Prepares For Oscar: "It Will Be Like The First Round Of Hagler-Hearns." Color Pinup: Steve Johnston. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Vargas-Quartey, Thomas Hearns, Felix Trinidad, common sense vs. cowardice.

Sept. 2000: Now Vargas Is Ready For Trinidad & De La Hoya. Color Pinup: Erik Morales. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Trinidad vs. all-time greats, Thomas Hearns, common sense vs. cowardice.

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Feb. 2001: Fernando Vargas' Internal Battle: If He Can't Win It, He Can't Beat Trinidad. Interview: Evander Holyfield. Also: Derrick Gainer, Roy Jones, Naseem Hamed.

April 2001: Lewis Is Too Much For Tua … But Could Tyson Do Any Better? Interview: Max Kellerman. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Wladimir Klitschko.

June 2001: Trinidad-Jones: Superfight Or Mismatch? Interview: Virgil Hill. Also: Mayweather-Corrales, Paul Ingle, Davey Hilton, Tyson's relationship with Vargas, Judah, and Mayweather.

Aug. 2001: Sugar Shane Mosley: Too Sweet For The Bad Boy Era? Interview: Richard Steele. Also: Evander Holyfield, Roy Jones, Jesus Chavez.

Oct. 2001: Tito Power—From Fans To Foes … Everyone's Feeling It! Interview: Lou DiBella. Also: Hasim Rahman, Vargas-Rivera, F.I.S.T.

Dec. 2001: Laila Ali: The Fighter, The Sex Symbol … The Future Of Women's Boxing? Interview: Laila Ali. Also: Oscar De La Hoya, Tim Austin, Manny Pacquiao, Hector Camacho Jr.

Feb. 2002: Bernard Hopkins: "I Am The American Dream. I Am The American Story." Interview: Wladimir Klitschko. Also: Omar Sheika, Vernon Forrest, Juan Lazcano.

April 2002: After Hitting Rock Bottom … Lennox Is Back On The Path To Greatness. Interview: Duva Boxing. Also: Zab Judah, Mike Tyson, Thomas Tate.

June 2002: Tyson vs. Lewis: 10-Page Preview & Analysis. Interview: Jameel McCline. Also: *Ali* movie, Dorin vs. Balbi & Ward vs. Leija.

Aug. 2002: Still Crazy After All These Years: Should Mike Tyson Be Allowed To Fight? Interview: Kostya Tszyu. Also: Barrera-Morales II preview, Ayala-Adams, Ricky Hatton.

Oct. 2002: Vernon Forrest vs. Shane Mosley: Two Careers On The Line! Interview: Fernando Vargas. Also: Mayweather-Castillo, Hopkins vs. all-time greats, heavyweight scrap heap.

Dec. 2002: Wladimir Klitschko: Would He Be Too Much For Lennox? Interview: Joe Calzaghe. Also: Barrera-Morales II, Evander Holyfield, Freddie Roach.

Winter 2002: A Realistic Look At Tyson's Comeback: He Can't Make History, But He Can Make Millions. Interview: Micky Ward. Also: Antonio Tarver, Antwun Echols, Acelino Freitas.

March 2003: Oscar De La Hoya—The War That Rages Within. Interview: Klitschko brothers. Also: Kassim Ouma, Eric Morel, holiday gifts.

May 2003: Danger Zone! Will Roy Jones Be Doomed By His Heavyweight Ego? Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Gatti-Ward II, Floyd Mayweather, Erik Morales.

July 2003: Boxing's Biggest X-Factor: Can Hopkins Recover From His Self-Inflicted Wounds? Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Kostya Tszyu, DaVarryl Williamson, 10 best defensive fighters.

Sept. 2003: Sugar Roy? How Jones Rates With The All-Time Greats. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Corrie Sanders, Jean-Marc Mormeck, Kermit Cintron.

Nov. 2003: De La Hoya-Mosley II: Will Three Years And Seven Pounds Make A Difference? Interview: James Toney. Also: Michael Watson, Erik Morales, Jones-Holyfield head-to-head.

Winter 2003: *KO* Interview Arturo Gatti: "Kostya Tszyu Needs Me More Than I Need Him." Also: Mayorga-Forrest II, Zab Judah, Corrales-Casamayor preview, Joe Calzaghe.

Feb. 2004: Shane Mosley: A Second Chance At Superstardom. Interview: Bernard Hopkins. Also: Laila Ali, Scott LeDoux, retirement.

April 2004: Human After All: Tarver Makes Jones Turn To Tyson. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Sharmba Mitchell, Toney-McCline preview, trash-talking.

June 2004: What Could Tyson Do To Jones? Also: Interview: Antonio Tarver. Also: Bernard Hopkins, Spinks-Mayorga.

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ALPHABET RATINGS

The Rankings of Boxing's Three International Governing Bodies

WBA RATINGS

(Ratings as of April 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: John Ruiz (USA)

1. Vacant
2. Hasim Rahman (USA)
3. James Toney (USA)
4. Lance Whitaker (USA)
5. Joe Mesi (USA)
6. David Tua (NZ)
7. Monte Barrett (USA)
8. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
9. Corrie Sanders (SA)
10. Owen Beck (JAM)
11. Nicolay Valuev (RUS)
12. Andrew Golota (POL)

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Champ: Jean Marc Mormeck (FRA)

1. Valery Brudov (RUS)
2. Virgil Hill (USA)
3. O'Neil Bell (USA)
4. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
5. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
6. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
7. Guillermo Jones (PAN)
8. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
9. Dale Brown (CAN)
10. Luis Pineda (PAN)
11. Pavel Melkomian (ARM)
12. Rudiger May (GER)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
Champ: Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)

1. Dariusz Michalczewski (GER)
2. Antonio Tarver (USA)
3. Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
4. Silvio Branco (ITA)
5. George Jones (USA)
6. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
7. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
8. Lou Del Valle (USA)
9. Stipe Drews (CRO)
10. Danny Batchelder (USA)
11. Bruno Girard (FRA)
12. Paul Murdoch (AUSTRL)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Manuel Siaca (PR)

1. Mads Larsen (DEN)
2. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
3. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
4. Jeff Lacy (USA)
5. Antwun Echols (USA)
6. Byron Mitchell (USA)
7. Brian Magee (GB)
8. Danilo Haussler (GER)
9. Nordin Ben-Salah (NETH)
10. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
11. Charles Brewer (USA)
12. Mario Veit (GER)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
Champ: Maselino Masoe (AUSTRL)

1. Bert Schenk (GER)
2. Robert Allen (USA)
3. Jermain Taylor (USA)
4. Kingsley Ikeke (NIG)
5. Howard Eastman (GB)
6. William Joppy (USA)
7. Marcos Silvano Diaz (ARG)
8. Kelly Pavlik (USA)
9. Raymond Joval (NETH)
10. Quentin Smith (USA)
11. Evans Ashira (DEN)
12. Derrell Coley (USA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Winky Wright (USA)
Champ: Travis Simms (USA)

1. Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
2. Fernando Vargas (USA)
3. Kassim Ouma (GHA)
4. Shane Mosley (USA)
5. Alejandro Garcia (MEX)
6. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
7. Verno Phillips (USA)
8. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
9. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
10. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
11. J.C. Candelo (COL)
12. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)

WELTERWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)
Champ: Jose Rivera (USA)

1. Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
3. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
4. Vernon Forrest (USA)
5. Michael Trabant (GER)
6. Kermit Cintron (PR)
7. Farhad Bakirov (UZB)
8. Teddy Reid (USA)
9. Chris Smith (USA)
10. Cosme Rivera (MEX)
11. Ishe Smith (USA)
12. Carlos Quintana (PR)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Champ: Vivian Harris (GUY)

1. Miguel Cotto (PR)
2. Ricky Hatton (GB)
3. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Andreas Kotelnik (GER)
6. Carlos Maussa (COL)
7. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
8. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
9. Souleyman M'Baye (FRA)
10. DeMarcus Corley (USA)
11. Kelson Pinto (BRA)
12. Masakazu Satake (JAP)

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Champ: Lakva Sim (MON)

1. Juan Lazcano (USA)
2. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
3. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
4. Julio Diaz (MEX)
5. Michael Clark (USA)
6. Courtney Burton (USA)
7. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
8. Miguel Callist (PAN)
9. Billy Irwin (CAN)
10. Juan Diaz (USA)
11. Pedro Miranda (SPA)
12. Artur Grigorian (UZB)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS

Champ: Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)

1. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
2. Randy Suico (PHIL)
3. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
4. Janos Nagy (HUN)
5. Michael Gomez (GB)
6. Nobuhito Honmo (JAP)
7. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
8. Mike Anchondo (USA)
9. Vicente Mosquera (PAN)
10. Mzonke Fana (SA)
11. Pongsith Wianwiset (THAI)
12. Jose Miguel Cotto (PR)

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Unified Champ: Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
Champ: Chris John (INDO)

1. Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)
2. Vacant
3. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
4. Derrick Gainer (USA)
5. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
6. Spend Abazi (DEN)
7. Osamu Sato (JAP)
8. Victor Polo (COL)
9. Oscar Leon (COL)
10. Orlando Salido (MEX)
11. Michael Brodie (GB)
12. Zahir Raheem (USA)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)

1. Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (THAI)
2. Somsak Sithchachawan (THAI)
3. Tim Austin (USA)
4. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
5. Yober Ortega (VEN)
6. Paulie Ayala (USA)
7. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
8. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
9. Alejandro Barrera (MEX)
10. Shoji Kimura (JAP)
11. Jorge Linares (VEN)
12. Daniel Ponce-DeLeon (MEX)

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Johnny Bredahl (DEN)

1. Julio Zarate (MEX)
2. Poongsawat Krachingdaen (THAI)
3. Diego Morales (MEX)
4. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
5. Jun Toriumi (JAP)
6. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
7. Leo Gamez (VEN)
8. Wladimir Sidorenko (UKR)
9. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
10. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
11. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
12. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Alexander Munoz (VEN)

1. Martin Castillo (MEX)
2. Eric Morel (USA)
3. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
4. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
5. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
6. Jose Navarro (USA)
7. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
8. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)
9. Luis Bolano (COL)
10. Felix Machado (VEN)
11. Reynaldo Lopez Brown (COL)
12. Cesar Lopez (USA)

FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Lorenzo Parra (VEN)

1. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
2. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
3. Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)
4. Brian Viloria (USA)
5. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
6. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
7. Cyril Bellanger (FRA)
8. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
9. Angel Priolo (COL)
10. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
11. Damaen Kelly (GB)
12. Cristian Mijares (MEX)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)

1. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
2. Pichit C. Siriwat (THAI)
3. Edgar Velasquez (VEN)
4. Roberto Vazquez (PAN)
5. Vicky Tamul (IND)
6. Masato Hatakeyama (JAP)
7. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
8. Fahlan Sakkreerin (THAI)
9. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)
10. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
11. Nerys Espinoza (NIC)
12. Manuel Vargas (MEX)

MINIMUMWEIGHTS

Champ: Noel Arambulet (VEN)

1. Juan Landaeta (VEN)
2. Heriberto Gejon (PHIL)
3. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
4. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
5. Sithembele Kibiti (SA)
6. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
7. Pornsawan Pramuk (THAI)
8. Yutaka Niida (JAP)
9. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
10. Genki Onaka (JAP)
11. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
12. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)

WBC RATINGS

(Ratings as of April 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: Vitali Klitschko (UKR)

1. Joe Mesi (USA)
2. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)
3. James Toney (USA)
4. Hasim Rahman (USA)
5. Henry Akinwande (NIG)
6. Jameel McCline (USA)
7. David Tua (NZ)
8. Mike Tyson (USA)
9. Monte Barrett (USA)
10. DaVarryl Williamson (USA)
11. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
12. Owen Beck (JAM)
13. Oleg Maskaev (UZB)
14. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
15. Eliecer Castillo (CUB)
16. Faruq Saleem (USA)
17. Dominick Guinn (USA)
18. Lance Whitaker (USA)
19. Derrick Jefferson (USA)
20. Luan Krasniqi (GER)
21. Dennis Bakhtov (KAZ)
22. Timo Hoffman (GER)
23. Jeremy Williams (USA)
24. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
25. Sinan Samil San (TUR)
26. Matt Skelton (GB)
27. Kevin McBride (IRE)
28. Samuel Peter (NIG)
29. Peter Okhello (UGA)
30. Nicolay Valouev (RUS)

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Champ: Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)

1. O'Neil Bell (USA)
2. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
3. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
4. Rydell Booker (USA)
5. Rudiger May (GER)
6. Dale Brown (CAN)
7. Pavel Melkomian (RUS)
8. Krysztov Wlodarczyk (POL)
9. Carl Thompson (GB)
10. Glen Kelly (AUSTRL)
11. Luis Andres Pineda (PAN)
12. Virgil Hill (USA)
13. Imamu Mayfield (USA)
14. Vincenzo Rossitto (ITA)
15. Valery Brudov (RUS)
16. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
17. Sebastiaan Rothman (SA)
18. Richard LaMontagne (USA)
19. Louis Azille (DR)
20. Felix Cora (USA)
21. Baldwin Hlongwane (SA)
22. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
23. Alexander Petkovic (GER)
24. Mark Hobson (GB)
25. Michael Simms (USA)
26. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
27. Mauro Ordiales (ARG)
28. Enzo Maccarinelli (GB)
29. Jorge Kahwagi (MEX)
30. James Elizalde (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: Roy Jones (USA)

1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
3. Stipe Drews (CRO)
4. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
5. Dariusz Michalczewski (GER)
6. Jesus Ruiz (MEX)
7. Tomasz Adamek (POL)
8. Elvir Muriqi (ALB)
9. Rico Hoye (USA)
10. Julio Gonzalez (MEX)
11. George Jones (USA)
12. Dan Batchelder (USA)
13. Kamel Amrane (FRA)
14. Matthew Barney (GB)
15. Jorge Castro (ARG)
16. Orlando Rivera (PR)
17. Lou Del Valle (USA)
18. Daniel Judah (USA)
19. Laudelino Barros (BRA)
20. Silvio Branco (ITA)
21. Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
22. Peter Oboh (GB)
23. Sergey Karanevich (RUS)
24. Adrian Diaconu (CAN)
25. Donnell Wiggins (USA)
26. Julian Letterlough (USA)
27. Troy Weaver (USA)
28. Hugo Garay (ARG)
29. Allan Green (USA)
30. Andrew Lowe (GB)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Markus Beyer (GER)
Interim Champ: Danny Green (AUSTRL)

1. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
2. Eric Lucas (CAN)
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Danilo Haussler (GER)
5. Jeff Lacy (USA)
6. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
7. Brian Magee (GB)
8. Scott Pemberton (USA)
9. Charles Brewer (USA)
10. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
11. Kabary Salem (EGY)
12. Rudy Markussen (DEN)
13. Otis Grant (CAN)
14. Robin Reid (GB)
15. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
16. Antwun Echols (USA)
17. Henry Porras (CR)
18. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
19. Enrique Ornelas (USA)
20. Yoshinori Nishizawa (JAP)
21. Robert Stieglitz (GER)
22. Jean Paul Mendy (FRA)
23. Andre Thysse (SA)
24. Librado Andrade (USA)
25. Willie Stewart (USA)
26. Victor Oganov (RUS)
27. Carmine Tufano (USA)
28. Vitaly Tsypko (UKR)
29. Jackson Chanet (FRA)
30. David Lopez (MEX)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)

1. Howard Eastman (GB)
2. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
3. Jermain Taylor (USA)
4. Keith Holmes (USA)
5. Kingsley Ikeke (CAN)
6. Sam Soliman (AUSTRL)
7. Robert Allen (USA)
8. Raymond Joval (HOL)
9. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
10. Quentin Smith (USA)
11. Sergey Tatevosyan (RUS)
12. Eric Mitchell (USA)
13. Epifanio Mendoza (COL)
14. Jorge Sendra (SPA)
15. Bert Schenk (GER)
16. Mariano Carrera (ARG)
17. Evans Ashira (KEN)
18. Kelly Pavlik (USA)
19. Yoshihiro Araki (JAP)
20. Leonard Pierre Anastan (HAI)
21. Willie Gibbs (USA)
22. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
23. Daniel Edouard (USA)
24. Chad Dawson (USA)
25. Marcos Silvano Diaz (ARG)
26. Alexey Chirkov (RUS)
27. James Obedi Toney (GHA)
28. Tokutaro Toyozumi (JAP)
29. Jesse Brinkley (USA)
30. Troy Rowland (USA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS

Champ: Winky Wright (USA)
Interim Champ: Javier Castillejo (SPA)

1. Fernando Vargas (USA)
2. Shane Mosley (USA)
3. Kassim Ouma (USA)
4. Sergio Martinez (ARG)
5. Marco Antonio Rubio (MEX)
6. Sergei Dzindziruk (UKR)
7. Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
8. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
9. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
10. Alex Bunema (USA)
11. J.C. Candelo (COL)
12. Tokunbo Olajide (CAN)
13. Toshiharu Kaneyama (JAP)
14. Raul Marquez (USA)
15. Aslan Kodzoev (RUS)
16. Jamie Moore (GB)
17. Rodney Jones (USA)
18. Nobuhiro Ishida (JAP)
19. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
20. Verno Phillips (USA)
21. Alejandro Garcia (MEX)
22. Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)
23. Nurhan Suleymanoglu (TUR)
24. Mihaly Kotai (HUN)
25. Christophe Canclaux (FRA)
26. Richard Williams (GB)
27. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)
28. Joachim Alcine (CAN)
29. Jose Luis Zertuche (MEX)
30. Jimmy Colas (FRA)

WELTERWEIGHTS

Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)

1. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
2. Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
3. Vernon Forrest (USA)
4. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
5. Miguel Rodriguez (MEX)
6. Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)
7. Ishe Smith (USA)
8. Manuel Gomez (MEX)
9. Christophe Henry (BAR)
10. Rev Santillan (PHIL)
11. Jose Luis Cruz (MEX)
12. Jawaid Khaliq (GB)
13. Alpaslam Aguzum (TUR)
14. Teddy Reid (USA)
15. Kermit Cintron (USA)
16. Frederic Klose (FRA)
17. Michel Trabant (GER)
18. Sebastian Lujan (ARG)
19. Rafael Pineda (COL)
20. Joseph Makaringe (SA)
21. Farkhad Bakirov (UZB)
22. Michele Orlando (ITA)
23. Hiroshi Watanabe (JAP)
24. Randall Bailey (USA)
25. Hiroyuki Maeda (JAP)
26. James Hare (GB)
27. Chris Smith (USA)
28. Joshua Clottey (GHA)
29. Carlos Quintana (PR)
30. Raul Bejarano (ARG)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS

Emeritus Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Champ: Arturo Gatti (CAN)

1. Leonard Dorin (CAN)
2. Miguel Cotto (PR)
3. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
4. Paul Spadafora (USA)
5. Ricky Hatton (GB)
6. James Leija (USA)
7. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
8. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
9. Cosme Rivera (MEX)
10. Kelson Pinto (BRA)
11. Carlos Maussa (COL)
12. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
13. DeMarcus Corley (USA)
14. Juan Urango (COL)
15. Lovemore Ndou (SA)
16. Junior Witter (GB)
17. Juan Valenzuela (MEX)

18. Victor Kpadenue (GHA)
19. Juan Carlos Rodriguez (MEX)
20. Alvaro Aguilar (MEX)
21. Jungbum Kim (KOR)
22. Eloy Rojas (VEN)
23. Hector Camacho Jr. (PR)
24. Jose Areli Lopez (MEX)
25. Cesar Bazan (MEX)
26. Norio Kimura (JAP)
27. Andreas Kotelnik (UKR)
28. Muhammad Abdullaev (UZB)
29. Salvatore Battaglia (ITA)
30. Jorge Rodriguez (MEX)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Floyd Mayweather (USA)

1. Juan Lazcano (USA)
2. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
3. Juan Diaz (MEX)
4. Phillip Ndou (SA)
5. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
6. Steve Johnston (USA)
7. Julio Diaz (USA)
8. Michael Clark (USA)
9. Jason Cook (GB)
10. Yuri Romanov (UKR)
11. Matt Zegan (POL)
12. Victoriano Sosa (DR)
13. Stefano Zoff (ITA)
14. Michele Delli Paoli (ITA)
15. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
16. Dennis Laurente (PHIL)
17. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
18. Antonio Pitalua (COL)
19. Aldo Rios (ARG)
20. Takehiro Shimada (JAP)
21. Cristian Bejarano (MEX)
22. Eleazar Contreras (USA)
23. Artur Grigorian (UZB)
24. David Burke (GB)
25. Graham Earl (GB)
26. Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)
27. Ernesto Zepeda (MEX)
28. Ricardo Silva (ARG)
29. Billy Irwin (CAN)
30. Rolando Reyes (USA)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Erik Morales (MEX)

1. Mzonke Fana (SA)
2. Randy Suico (PHIL)
3. Jesus Chavez (USA)
4. Zahir Raheem (USA)
5. Mike Anchondo (USA)
6. Boris Sinitsin (RUS)
7. Nobuto Honmo (JAP)
8. Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)
9. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
10. Janos Nagy (HUN)
11. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
12. Fernando Trejo (MEX)
13. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
14. Orlando Salido (MEX)
15. Goyo Vargas (MEX)
16. Miguel Angel Huerta (MEX)
17. Edwin Valero (VEN)
18. Valdemir Pereira (BRA)
19. Steve Luevano (USA)
20. Julio Garcia (MEX)
21. Daniel Dominguez (MEX)
22. Nate Campbell (USA)
23. Michael Gomez (GB)
24. Jose Cotto (PR)
25. Craig Docherty (GB)
26. Leonardo Resendiz (MEX)
27. Koba Gogaladze (GEO)
28. Alex Arthur (GB)
29. Bobby Pacquiao (PHIL)
30. Aldo Valtierra (MEX)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Injin Chi (KOR)

1. Rocky Juarez (USA)
2. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
3. Humberto Soto (MEX)
4. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
5. Michael Brodie (GB)
6. Nicky Cook (GB)
7. Spend Abazi (DEN)
8. Juan Carlos Ramirez (MEX)
9. William Abelyan (USA)
10. Guty Espadas (MEX)
11. Hector Velazquez (MEX)
12. Eiichi Sugama (JAP)
13. Frankie Archuleta (USA)
14. Derrick Gainer (USA)
15. Luis Fuente (MEX)
16. Osamu Sato (JAP)
17. Jorge Solis (MEX)
18. Willie Jorrin (USA)
19. Yuyani Bungu (SA)
20. Daniel Maldonado (USA)
21. Cyril Thomas (FRA)
22. Gamaliel Diaz (MEX)
23. Manuel Calvo (SPA)
24. Osamanu Akaba (GHA)
25. Tommy Browne (AUSTRL)
26. Whyber Garcia (PAN)
27. Dainoshin Kuma (JAP)
28. Carlos Gamez (MEX)
29. Jorge Monzon (MEX)
30. Cornelius Lock (USA)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar Larios (MEX)

1. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
2. Napapol Kiattisakchocchoi (THAI)
3. Yoshikane Nakajima (JAP)
4. Daniel Ponce (MEX)
5. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
6. Shigeru Nakazato (JAP)
7. Jimrex Jaca (PHIL)
8. Paulie Ayala (USA)
9. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
10. Jorge Linares (VEN)
11. Seungsok Chae (KOR)
12. Hector Julio Avila (DR)
13. Jose Rojas (VEN)
14. Art Simonyan (USA)
15. Fernando Beltran Jr. (MEX)
16. Akihiro Kanai (JAP)
17. Esham Pickering (GB)
18. Adolfo Landeros (MEX)
19. Antonio Meza (MEX)
20. Junichi Watanabe (JAP)
21. Cuauhtemoc Vargas (MEX)
22. Masakazu Sugawara (JAP)
23. Eduardo Garcia (MEX)
24. Sergio Medina (ARG)
25. Ricardo Castillo (MEX)
26. Sammy Ventura (MEX)
27. Michael Hunter (GB)
28. Alejandro Barrera (MEX)
29. Yuta Nagai (JAP)
30. Armando Guerrero (USA)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)

1. Diego Morales (MEX)
2. Genaro Garcia (USA)
3. Adonis Rivas (NIC)
4. Hozumi Hasegawa (JAP)
5. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
6. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
7. Vusi Malinga (SA)
8. Jorge Lacierva (MEX)
9. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
10. Manabu Fukushima (JAP)
11. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
12. David Guerault (FRA)
13. Noel Wilders (GB)
14. Gerardo Martinez (MEX)
15. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
16. Silence Mabuza (SA)
17. Franklin Theran (COL)
18. Khulile Makeba (SA)
19. Steve Molitor (CAN)
20. Julio Cesar Avila (MEX)
21. Francisco Mateos (MEX)
22. Wladimir Sidorenko (UKR)
23. Saenghiran Lookbanyai (THAI)
24. Jun Toriumi (JAP)
25. Sasha Baktin (RUS)
26. Miguel Angel Munguia (MEX)
27. Akihiko Nago (JAP)
28. Eduardo Escobedo (MEX)
29. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
30. Cesar Morales (MEX)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Masamori Tokuyama (JAP)

1. Jose Navarro (USA)
2. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
3. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
4. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
5. Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)
6. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
7. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
8. Martin Castillo (MEX)
9. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
10. Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)
11. Joven Jorda (PHIL)
12. Luis Bolano (COL)
13. Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)
14. Gerson Guerrero (MEX)
15. Hugo Ramirez (MEX)
16. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
17. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
18. Cecilio Santos (MEX)
19. Seiji Tanaka (JAP)
20. Alex Becerra (USA)
21. Ivan Hernandez (MEX)
22. Waenpetch Chuwatana (THAI)
23. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
24. Oscar Andrade (MEX)
25. Raul Juarez (MEX)
26. Jose Beranza (MEX)
27. Sergio Santillan (ARG)
28. Cyril Bellanger (FRA)
29. Karim Quibir (SPA)
30. Shin Ogata (JAP)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)

1. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
2. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
3. Noriyuki Komatsu (JAP)
4. Brian Viloria (USA)
5. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
6. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
7. Jair Jimenez (COL)
8. Eric Morel (PR)
9. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
10. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
11. Vic Darchinyan (AUSTRL)
12. Diosdado Gabi (PHIL)
13. Evert Briceno (NIC)
14. Angel Priolo (COL)
15. Masaki Nakanuma (JAP)
16. Koji Koyama (JAP)
17. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
18. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
19. Carlos Bouchan (MEX)
20. Raul Eliseo Medina (ARG)
21. Damaen Kelly (GB)
22. Christian Mijares (MEX)
23. Luis Angel Martinez (MEX)
24. Denburapa Ekarin (THAI)
25. Julio Ler (ARG)
26. Gabriel Elizondo (USA)
27. Steffen Norskov (DEN)
28. Jose Araiza (MEX)
29. Marcos Obregon (ARG)
30. Khunsuk Lukprabat (THAI)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jorge Arce (MEX)

1. Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)
2. Roberto Vazquez (PAN)
3. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
4. Masato Hatakeyama (JAP)
5. Manuel Vargas (MEX)
6. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
7. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
8. Ulises Solis (MEX)
9. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
10. Luis Valdez (MEX)
11. Sarikalek O. Eakarin (THAI)
12. Nerys Espinoza (NIC)
13. Edgar Sosa (MEX)
14. Omar Nino (MEX)
15. Yosam Choi (KOR)
16. Rafael Lozano (SPA)
17. Monelisi Myekeni (SA)
18. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
19. Vicky Tahumil (INDO)
20. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
21. Andrea Sarritzu (ITA)
22. Hugo Cazares (MEX)
23. Carlos Fajardo (NIC)
24. Javier Lagos (MEX)
25. Juan Centeno (NIC)
26. Bert Batawang (PHIL)
27. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
28. Ernesto Castro (NIC)
29. Jose Lopez (PR)
30. Munetsugu Kayo (JAP)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Champ: Eagle Akakura (JAP)

1. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
2. Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)
3. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
4. Heriberto Gijon (PHIL)
5. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
6. Mohamed Rachman (INDO)
7. Juan Palacios (NIC)
8. Sithembele Kibiti (SA)
9. Oledong Sithsanerchai (THAI)
10. Armand de la Cruz (PHIL)
11. Lorenzo Trejo (MEX)
12. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
13. Francisco Rosas (MEX)
14. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
15. Pornsawan Porpramook (THAI)
16. Teruo Misawa (JAP)
17. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
18. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
19. Omar Soto (MEX)
20. Miguel Telliz (NIC)
21. Sizwe Sinyabi (SA)
22. Namchai Ratanachaigym (THAI)
23. Ricardo San Martin (MEX)
24. Gerardo Verde (MEX)
25. Iwan Key (INDO)
26. Makoto Suzuki (JAP)
27. Nkosinathi Joyi (SA)
28. Shunsuke Nagao (JAP)
29. Valentin Leon (MEX)
30. Emilio Aguelican (MEX)

IBF RATINGS
(Ratings as of April 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Chris Byrd (USA)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Jameel McCline (USA)
4. James Toney (USA)
5. Juan Carlos Gomez (USA)
6. Hasim Rahman (USA)
7. Andrew Golota (USA)
8. Joe Mesi (USA)
9. Lance Whitaker (USA)
10. Vassiliy Jirov (USA)
11. David Tua (NZ)
12. Henry Akinwande (GB)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant

1. Kelvin Davis (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Ezra Sellers (USA)
4. O'Neil Bell (USA)
5. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
6. Luis Pineda (PAN)
7. Ravea Springs (USA)
8. Guillermo Jones (PAN)
9. Dale Brown (CAN)
10. Carl Thompson (GB)
11. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
12. Vadim Tokarev (RUS)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Glencoffe Johnson (USA)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Montell Griffin (USA)
4. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
5. Clinton Woods (GB)
6. Richard Hall (USA)
7. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
8. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
9. Rico Hoye (USA)
10. Dariusz Michalczewski (POL)
11. Stipe Drews (CRO)
12. Tomasz Adamek (POL)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant

1. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
2. Vacant
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Danilo Haussler (GER)
5. Jeff Lacy (USA)
6. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
7. Charles Brewer (USA)
8. Mario Veit (GER)
9. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
10. Robin Reid (GB)
11. Vitaly Tsypko (UKR)
12. Kabary Salem (USA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)

1. Robert Allen (USA)
2. Raymond Joval (HOL)
3. Jermain Taylor (USA)
4. Sam Soliman (AUSTRL)
5. Bert Schenk (GER)
6. Howard Eastman (GB)
7. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
8. Derrell Coley (USA)
9. Bea Diallo (LIB)
10. Hector Velazco (ARG)
11. Angel Hernandez (USA)
12. Kelly Pavlik (USA)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant

1. Kassim Ouma (USA)
2. Verno Phillips (USA)
3. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
4. Vernon Forrest (USA)
5. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)
6. J.C. Candelo (USA)
7. Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
8. Julio Garcia (USA)
9. Fernando Vargas (USA)
10. Tokundo Olajide (USA)
11. Keith Holmes (USA)
12. Alejandro Garcia (MEX)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Teddy Reid (USA)
4. Rafael Pineda (COL)
5. Cosme Rivera (MEX)
6. Kermit Cintron (USA)
7. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
8. Jose Celaya (USA)
9. Ishe Smith (USA)
10. James Hare (ENG)
11. Christian Bladt (DEN)
12. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Interim Champ: Sharmba Mitchell (USA)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Ricky Hatton (ENG)
4. Lovemore Ndou (AUSTRL)
5. Miguel Cotto (USA)
6. Mike Stewart (USA)
7. James Leija (USA)
8. Diobelys Hurtado (USA)
9. DeMarcus Corley (USA)
10. Paul Spadafora (USA)
11. Omar Weis (ARG)
12. Juan Valenzuela (MEX)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Javier Jauregui (MEX)

1. Julio Diaz (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Levander Johnson (USA)
4. Michael Clark (USA)
5. Courtney Burton (USA)
6. Artur Grigorian (UZB)
7. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
8. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
9. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
10. Steve Johnston (USA)
11. Steve Quinones (USA)
12. Craig Weber (USA)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Carlos Hernandez (USA)

1. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
2. Vacant
3. Steve Forbes
4. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
5. Joel Casamayor (USA)
6. Sirimongkol Singmanassak (THAI)
7. Nate Campbell (USA)
8. David Santos (USA)
9. Phillip Ndou (SA)
10. Janos Nagy (HUN)
11. Mike Anchondo (USA)
12. Michael Gomez (IRE)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)
4. Orlando Salido (MEX)
5. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
6. Zahir Raheem (USA)
7. Rocky Juarez (USA)
8. Fahprakorb Rakkiatgym (THAI)
9. Derrick Gainer (USA)
10. Spend Abazi (DEN)
11. Emmanuel Lucero (USA)
12. Humberto Soto (MEX)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Israel Vazquez (MEX)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Paulie Ayala (USA)
4. Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)
5. Art Simonyan (USA)
6. David Donis (USA)
7. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
8. Fahsung 3K Battery (THAI)
9. Agapito Sanchez (DR)
10. Alejandro Barrera (MEX)
11. Diego Morales (MEX)
12. Bobby Boy Velardez (USA)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Rafael Marquez (MEX)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
4. Genaro Garcia (MEX)
5. Pete Frissina (USA)
6. David Guerault (FRA)
7. Jorge Lacierva (USA)
8. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
9. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
10. Mauricio Pastrana (PAN)
11. Daniel Ponce DeLeon (MEX)
12. Diego Morales (MEX)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Luis Perez (NIC)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Martin Castillo (MEX)
4. Jose Navarro (USA)
5. Luis Bolano (COL)
6. Felix Machado (VEN)
7. Eric Morel (USA)
8. Jason Booth (ENG)
9. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
10. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
11. Peter Culshaw (ENG)
12. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Irene Pacheco (COL)

1. Vic Darchinian (AUSTRL)
2. Vacant
3. Jair Jimenez (COL)
4. Damaen Kelly (GB)
5. Hussein Hussein (LEB)
6. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
7. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
8. Angel Priolo (COL)
9. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
10. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
11. Hawk Makepula (SA)
12. Diosado Gabi (PHIL)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Burgos (MEX)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)
4. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
5. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
6. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
7. Yosam Choi (KOR)
8. Tatsuo Hatashida (JAP)
9. Alexander Sanchez (PR)
10. Roberto Vasquez (PAN)
11. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
12. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)

MINI FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Daniel Reyes (COL)

1. Muhammad Rachman (INDO)
2. Vacant
3. Pichit Siriwat (THAI)
4. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
5. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
6. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
7. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
8. Jose Lopez (PR)
9. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
10. Eriberto Gejon (PHIL)
11. Omar Soto (MEX)
12. Juan Palacios (NIC)

CLASSIC

From THE RING, February 1993

DEADLY BANTAMWEIGHT JUNIOR JONES

There's No Antidote For His "Poison"

By Robert Cassidy

Some things just seem to draw people out to the left coast. When surfers seek the most radical waves in the world, they head to the Pacific. When actors want to really make it big, they pack their bags for Hollywood. And when a bantamweight is serious about challenging for the world title, he starts booking fights in California.

While some of the finest bantamweights in history came out of Mexico, their careers usually began to flourish at the Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles or the Fabulous Forum in Inglewood. That was during the 1970s, when most East Coast bantamweights were advised to follow the path of baseball's Dodgers and Giants: "Go west, young and tiny man."

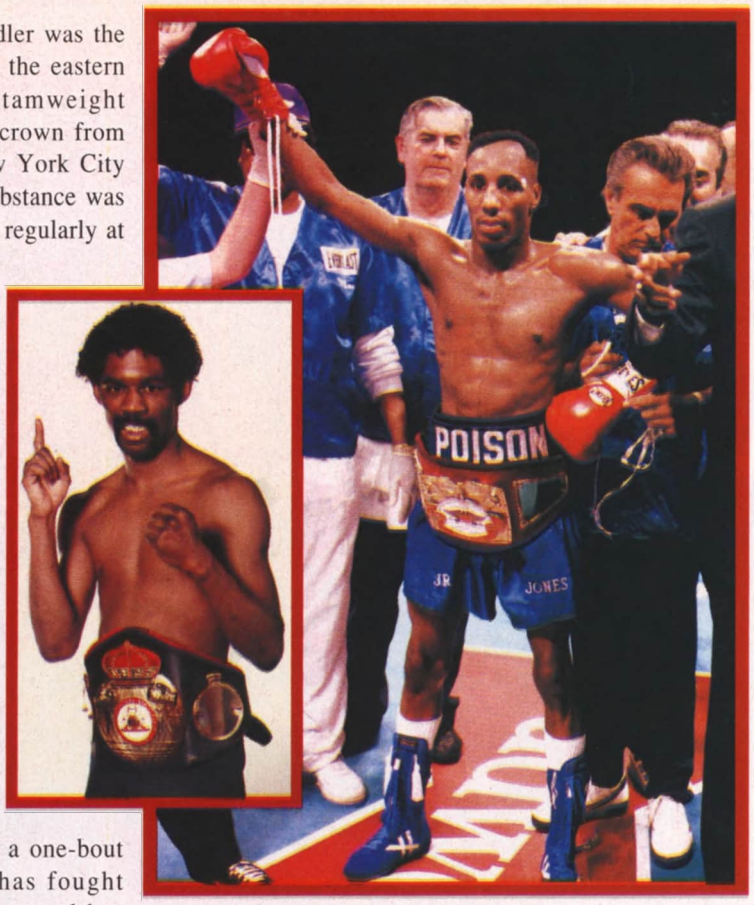
Someone once told that to "Poison" Junior Jones. But Jones, born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, had his feet firmly planted on the Big Apple's asphalt. Just like Sinatra said, Jones figured that if he could make it in New York, he'd make it anywhere. At 21, Poison is 25-0 (17), and the best young bantamweight in the world. He's only a title fight away from having made it.

"They said it can't be done, but it's being proven by me," he said.

Philadelphia's Jeff Chandler was the last significant fighter from the eastern seaboard to reign as bantamweight champion, having held the crown from 1980 to 1984. The last New York City bantamweight of any real substance was Davey Vasquez, who fought regularly at Madison Square Garden in the '70s and briefly held the North American 118-pound title.

The belief has always been that a bantamweight can't be cultivated properly in a place like New York City. There aren't enough opponents for matchmakers to choose from, and it can get expensive flying in a bantamweight every six weeks.

But Jones insists that if you can *really* fight, it doesn't matter what coast you're based on. And Jones *can* really fight. Outside of a one-bout excursion to Kansas, he has fought exclusively in the Northeast, and has sent every imported 118-pounder who's dared to cross a time zone back home with a loss.



Jones was looking to become the first East Coast-based fighter to win a bantamweight title since Philadelphia's Jeff Chandler (inset), who reigned as bantamweight champion from 1980 to 1984.

Some pretty good fighters have made the trek east. Jones decisioned former IBF flyweight beltholder Rolando Bohol in October '91, and two months later, stopped Dio Andujar to win the vacant USBA title. (Three months earlier, Andujar had knocked out future WBA titlist Eddie Cook.)

Jones' ninth-round stoppage of Dio Andujar in December '91 solidified "Poison" as a major bantamweight threat. Andujar had previously knocked out respected Eddie Cook. "I knew Andujar was tough," Jones said. "He knocked out Cook, so he gave me a lot to think about."

"That's when I really started blooming," said Jones. "I knew Andujar was tough. He knocked out Cook, so he gave me a lot to think about."

Jones opened the Andujar fight in typically aggressive fashion, spearing the veteran with jabs and right hands. But Andujar changed from an orthodox stance to southpaw in round five, which swung the momentum. A right hook opened a cut along Jones' left eyebrow, and for the first time in his pro career, the Brooklyn prodigy was in danger.

"The Andujar fight answered some questions about Junior," said his trainer, Joe Fariello. "I think Junior really came of age in the Alejandro Sanabria fight [in June '91]. The Andujar fight just confirmed it."

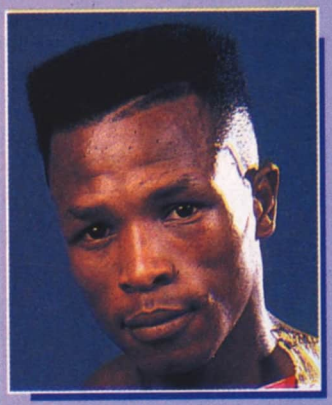
Jones' ninth-round stoppage of Andujar solidified him as a major title threat. And while Poison has been poised to dethrone a champion for the past year, securing a title fight hasn't been easy. Jones was promised a shot at WBC beltholder Greg Richardson in '91, but Richardson was stopped by Joichiro Tatsuyoshi.

After the Andujar fight, Top Rank offered Jones a shot at WBA titlist Israel Contreras, but after thrashing Andujar, Jones wound up hospitalized with a serious infection in his right hand. Rather than jeopardize Jones against a titleholder, Fariello and manager Gary Gittelsohn passed on the opportunity. Top Rank inserted Cook, who knocked out Contreras. Jones claims he was promised the winner. The Las Vegas-based Cook, however, was not anxious to fight his East Coast rival. As it turned out, he lost his title on a decision to Jorge Eliecer Julio in October.

"We were promised the winner of the Cook-Contreras fight," said Gittelsohn. "If we thought it was a one-time shot, where Junior would never get the opportunity to fight Cook or Contreras, we may have had the doctor make a re-evaluation. But even then I think it would have been in Junior's worst interest. The next thing I know, they wouldn't deliver the fight. Before I made any deals with anyone else, I gave Top Rank four months to make the fight."

Top Rank matchmaker Ron Katz maintains that the Jones camp "wanted its cake and eat it, too."

THE RING RATINGS, February 1993



Welcome Ncita

HEAVYWEIGHTS
1. **Evander Holyfeld,** Atlanta, GA
2. **Riddick Bowe,** Fort Washington, MD
3. **Razor Ruddock,** Canada
4. **Michael Moorer,** Detroit, MI
5. **Tony Tucker,** Beverly Hills, CA
6. **George Foreman,** Marshall, TX
7. **Lennox Lewis,** England
8. **Ray Mercer,** Newark, NJ
9. **Tommy Morrison,** Mariam, KS
10. **Alex Stewart,** Safety Harbor, FL

CRUISERWEIGHTS
1. **Bobby Czyz,** Montgomery, NJ
2. **Alfred Cole,** Newark, NJ
3. **Anaclet Wamba,** France
4. **Orlin Norris,** Campo, CA
5. **Jeff Lampkin,** Youngstown, OH
6. **James Warring,** Miami, FL
7. **Nate Miller,** Philadelphia, PA
8. **Akim Tafer,** France
9. **Arthur Williams,** Las Vegas, NV
10. **Robert Daniels,** Miami, FL

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
1. **Prince Charles Williams,** Mansfield, OH
2. **Thomas Hearns,** Detroit, MI
3. **Virgil Hill,** Bismarck, ND
4. **Jeff Harding,** Australia
5. **Leeonzer Barber,** Detroit, MI
6. **Frank Tate,** Houston, TX
7. **Henry Maske,** Germany
8. **Tim Hillie,** Washington, D.C.
9. **Saul Montana,** Mexico
10. **Randall Yonker,** Mobile, AL

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
1. **Michael Nunn,** Davenport, IA
2. **Iran Barkley,** Bronx, NY
3. **Chris Eubank,** England
4. **Victor Cordoba,** N. Ireland
5. **Nigel Benn,** England
6. **Tim Littles,** Flint, MI
7. **Darrin Van Horn,** Lexington, KY
8. **Tony Thornton,** Glassboro, NJ
9. **Merqui Sosa,** New York, NY
10. **Frank Nicotra,** France

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
1. **Julian Jackson,** Virgin Islands
2. **James Toney,** Ann Arbor, MI
3. **Mike McCallum,** Brooklyn, NY
4. **Sumbu Kalambay,** Italy
5. **Roy Jones,** Pensacola, FL
6. **Reggie Johnson,** Houston, TX
7. **Lamar Parks,** Greeneville, SC
8. **Gerald McClellan,** Detroit, MI
9. **Bernard Hopkins,** Philadelphia, PA
10. **Steve Collins,** Brockton, MA

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
1. **Terry Norris,** Mission Valley, CA
2. **Gianfranco Rosi,** Italy
3. **Vinny Pazienza,** Cranston, RI
4. **John David Jackson,** Seattle, WA
5. **Verno Phillips,** New York, NY
6. **Julio Cesar Vasquez,** Argentina
7. **Gilbert Dele,** France
8. **Carl Daniels,** St. Louis, MO
9. **Aaron Davis,** Bronx, NY
10. **Simon Brown,** Germantown, MD

WELTERWEIGHTS
1. **Buddy McGirt,** Hauppauge, NY
2. **Meldrick Taylor,** Cheltenham, PA
3. **Maurice Blocker,** Germantown, MD
4. **Genaro Leon,** Mexico
5. **Yory Boy Campas,** Mexico
6. **Manning Galloway,** Columbus, OH
7. **Crisanto Espana,** N. Ireland
8. **Glenwood Brown,** Plainfield, NJ
9. **Ludovic Proto,** France
10. **Anthony Jones,** Detroit, MI

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
1. **Julio Cesar Chavez,** Mexico
2. **Pernell Whitaker,** Norfolk, VA
3. **Terrence Alli,** Linden, NJ
4. **Charles Murray,** Newark, NJ
5. **Morris East,** Philippines
6. **Rafael Pineda,** Colombia
7. **Greg Haugen,** Henderson, NV
8. **Carlos Gonzalez,** Mexico
9. **Hector Lopez,** Tarzana, CA
10. **Vincent Phillips,** Las Vegas, NV

LIGHTWEIGHTS
1. **Miguel Angel Gonzalez,** Mexico
2. **Joey Gamache,** Lewiston, ME
3. **Freddie Pendleton,** Miami, FL
4. **Jorge Paez,** Mexico
5. **Tracy Spann,** Plainfield, NJ
6. **Darryll Tyson,** Washington, D.C.
7. **Sharmba Mitchell,** Takoma Park, MD
8. **Tony Lopez,** Sacramento, CA
9. **Jean-Baptiste Mendy,** France
10. **Frankie Mitchell,** Philadelphia, PA

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
1. **Azumah Nelson,** Ghana
2. **Genaro Hernandez,** Los Angeles, CA
3. **John-John Molina,** Puerto Rico
4. **Jeff Fenech,** Australia
5. **Bernard Taylor,** Knoxville, TN
6. **Gabe Ruelas,** Arleta, CA
7. **Calvin Grove,** Philadelphia, PA

"They fought Diego Avila nine days before Cook fought Contreras," said Katz. "There's no grudge here, they just didn't think the kid was ready to fight Contreras. Then Cook didn't want to fight Jones; I'm not gonna deny that."

His inability to get Cook in the ring led to Jones' departure from Top Rank and his return to Madison Square Garden Boxing, with whom he turned pro in '89. It's rare when a valued commodity such as Jones changes promoters, but Jones has done it twice. And he's changed managers, too.

After winning two New York Golden Gloves titles, Jones ended his amateur career with a record of 150-9 and turned pro under New York-based manager Wayne Cook. But Cook ran into legal problems and sold Jones' contract to Gittelsohn for $20,000. (In August, Cook pleaded guilty to one count of grand larceny and one count of a scheme to defraud. The matters were not boxing related.)

"With Gary, I have no problems," said Jones. "There's a great deal of friendship and trust. I'm very comfortable with him."

"I knew Junior was a great talent,"

8. **Regilio Tuur,** Whitestone, NY
9. **Yuji Watanabe,** Japan
10. **Renato Cornett,** Australia

FEATHERWEIGHTS

1. **Paul Hodkinson,** England
2. **Manuel Medina,** Mexico
3. **Yung Kyun Park,** South Korea
4. **Kevin Kelley,** Flushing, NY
5. **Jesse James Leija,** San Antonio, TX
6. **Tom Johnson,** Detroit, MI
7. **Ruben D. Palacio,** Colombia
8. **Louie Espinoza,** Phoenix, AZ
9. **Colin McMillan,** England
10. **Ever Beleno,** Colombia

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

1. **Welcome Ncita,** South Africa
2. **Tracy Patterson,** Highland, NY
3. **Jesse Benavides,** Corpus Christi, TX
4. **Wilfredo Vasquez,** Puerto Rico
5. **Kennedy McKinney,** Las Vegas, NV
6. **Jesus Salud,** San Diego, CA
7. **Rudy Zavala,** Rosemead, CA
8. **Luis Mendoza,** Colombia
9. **Thierry Jacob,** France
10. **Julio Gervacio,** Puerto Rico

BANTAMWEIGHTS

1. **Orlando Canizales,** Laredo, TX
2. **Eliecer Julio,** Colombia
3. **Victor Rabanales,** Mexico
4. **Junior Jones,** Brooklyn, NY
5. **Joichiro Tatsuyoshi,** Japan
6. **Eddie Cook,** Las Vegas, NV
7. **Israel Contreras,** Venezuela
8. **Javier Leon,** Mexico
9. **Rafael Del Valle,** Puerto Rico
10. **Harold Mestre,** Colombia

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

1. **Sung Kil Moon,** South Korea
2. **Robert Quiroga,** San Antonio, TX
3. **Katsuya Onizuka,** Japan
4. **Thalerngsak Sithbaobay,** Thailand
5. **Armando Castro,** Mexico
6. **Greg Richardson,** Youngstown, OH
7. **Vincenzo Belcastro,** Italy
8. **Johnny Bredahl,** Denmark
9. **Gerry Penalosa,** Philippines
10. **Nana Konadu,** Ghana

FLYWEIGHTS

1. **Yuri Arbachakov,** Japan
2. **Rodolfo Blanco,** Colombia
3. **Aquiles Guzman,** Venezuela
4. **Dave McAuley,** Ireland
5. **Scotty Olson,** Las Vegas, NV
6. **Yong Kang Kim,** South Korea
7. **Muangchai Kittikasem,** Thailand
8. **Yun Un Chin,** South Korea
9. **Ysaias Zamudio,** Blythe, CA
10. **Al Kotey,** Philadelphia, PA

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

1. **Hiroki Ioka,** Japan
2. **Michael Carbajal,** Phoenix, AZ
3. **Humberto Gonzalez,** Mexico
4. **Myung Woo Yuh,** South Korea
5. **Melchor Cob Castro,** Mexico
6. **Leon Salazar,** Panama
7. **Jose DeJesus,** Puerto Rico
8. **Robinson Cuesta,** Panama
9. **Kwang Sun Kim,** South Korea
10. **Domingo Sosa,** Dominican Republic

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **Julio Cesar Chavez,** Junior Welterweight
2. **Pernell Whitaker,** Junior Welterweight
3. **Terry Norris,** Junior Middleweight
4. **Evander Holyfield,** Heavyweight
5. **Orlando Canizales,** Bantamweight
6. **Buddy McGirt,** Welterweight
7. **Azumah Nelson,** Junior Lightweight
8. **Julian Jackson,** Middleweight
9. **Sung Kil Moon,** Junior Bantamweight
10. **James Toney,** Middleweight

said Gittelsohn. "I was very close with Joe [Fariello], and he would routinely talk about Junior. I lived vicariously through Joe before I finally got to know Junior. When Wayne had his problems, Junior felt it was natural to go with me. Wayne was agreeable to the deal because it was what Junior wanted."

Jones' final fight with Top Rank was against Avila in March. Coming into his bout with Jones, the rugged journeyman had lost six straight fights. In dropping consecutive decisions to Fernie Morales, Jesse Benavides, Tony Wilson, Jemal Hinton, Cook, and Jesus Salud, Avila had sampled the best of the bantamweight and junior featherweight divisions. The fights with Wilson, Hinton, and Cook went 12 rounds.

Jones accomplished what the others couldn't when he stopped Avila in five rounds.

"When I knocked him out," said Jones, "I showed myself that I was a better puncher than guys in the heavier divisions."

It seems impossible for someone so skinny to be so strong. A dynamic one-punch knockout artist Jones is not, but his punches have a nasty cumulative effect. His attack is so steady and so fierce that few foes have been able to withstand it.

"Every 10 or 20 years a freak of nature comes along," said Fariello. "A guy like Bob Foster, a Thomas Hearns, or a Mark Breland. They look like a strong wind will blow them over. I think Junior is like them. He's such a stiff puncher. His opponents really don't believe he's that destructive until they fight him."

At 5'8", the reed-thin Jones *is* a freak of nature. He has been making 118 pounds since the age of 15, but there is plenty of room for growth. His torso begins with a 28-inch waist and juts out to a pair of round, muscular shoulders.

"I believe that Junior will comfortably fill out to be a lightweight," said Gittelsohn. "I liken him to Thomas Hearns. He could be a three- or four-division champion. So far, Junior's lived up to every expectation, and he continues to reach new heights."

At the Garden's Paramount in September, Jones stopped former USBA champion and world title challenger Eddie Rangel. The Texan was floored twice and was never close to being in the fight. He succumbed 14 seconds into round seven, when referee Arthur Mercante Jr. mercifully stopped the contest.

"I think Rangel is my biggest win," said Jones. "He was a big name at one time. I beat him worse than any other fighter beat him. From what I heard, there were people who thought he could beat me."

The Rangel victory came on an evening during which fellow Garden contenders Glenwood Brown and Juan Negron were upset. It's been a particularly scary period for MSG, which also saw Ricardo Cepeda, the WBC's number-one ranked featherweight, kayoed in March.

The Andujar victory showed Jones was able to deal with adversity. Despite Jones consistently scoring with his jab, Andujar changed the momentum in the fifth round, when he switched from an orthodox stance to southpaw. "The Andujar fight answered some questions about Junior," said Jones' trainer, Joe Fariello.

But in Jones, there is little doubt the Garden has a streaking future champion.

Poison is ranked first by the IBF, second by the WBA, and second by the WBC. He should soon become the top man in the WBA; Julio had previously been ranked first, and Jones should slide into his spot. It all seems like a natural progression for a kid who was called a future Hall of Famer when he was just 2-0. Even the honest Fariello, who has criticized his own fighters in the past, has heaped lavish praise on the bantamweight. After Jones' ninth fight, he said it was "a foregone conclusion" that Poison would be a champion.

"Everything has happened so quickly," said Jones. "And the opponents I had weren't easy guys. I had to prove myself right away. Being what people were saying, I had to prove I was the guy people were talking about."

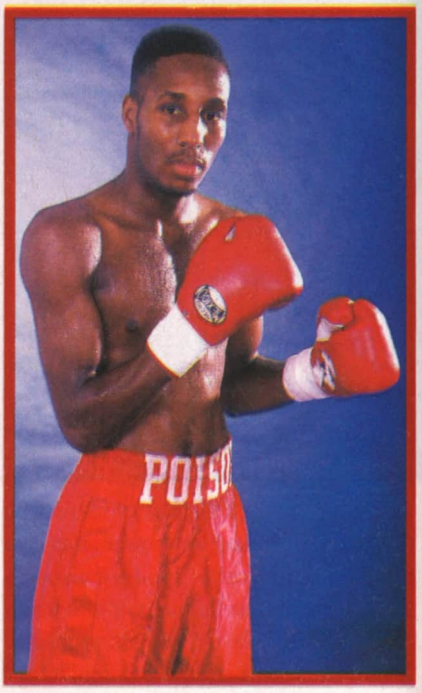
There are few boxing insiders who haven't been impressed. Even the usually acerbic Katz remains a fan.

"I hope he gets a title fight because he'll win," the matchmaker said. "He would have definitely knocked out Contreras, and I think he has a helluva shot against [IBF titlist] Orlando Canizales."

"I love him," said Kevin Monaghan, the boxing coordinator for NBC. "The kid has the entire package."

Monaghan wanted to televise Jones against WBC titlist Victor Rabanales but didn't have an available date until next March. "I couldn't expect Junior to wait that long for a title fight," he said. "It wouldn't be fair."

As we went to press, The Garden was instead hoping to make the Jones-Rabanales match for November 10 in Cancun, Mexico. If that does not materialize, Gittelsohn will target WBA king Julio. The one glaring absence from the hit list is IBF champion Canizales. The Texan is considered to be the best bantamweight in the world, and his omission from Jones' immediate future is even



At 5'8," Jones had somehow been able to maintain his 118-pound frame since he was 15. He was also able to apply a surprisingly powerful punch, reminding his handlers of lanky punchers like Thomas Hearns.

Jones was looking for a title shot by the end of '93, and supporting his argument was a seventh-round stoppage of title challenger Eddie Rangel. "He was a big name at one time," Junior said of Rangel. "I beat him worse than any other fighter beat him."

more conspicuous when you consider that Jones is Canizales' mandatory challenger.

"You get to a stage in your career, where I am now, when it really doesn't matter who you fight," said Jones. "If you can't beat the guys you have to fight for the title, you might as well get a day job. If you left it up to me, I'd fight Canizales tomorrow. But my manager says that if he comes to the table with a belt and I come to the table with a belt, the fight will be worth a lot more money."

"For business reasons it doesn't make sense to fight him now," said Fariello. "I think Canizales is one of the top five or six fighters in the world, pound-for-pound. But when he fights Junior, he's going to deal with problems he's never dealt with before."

Until Jones can get a world champion in the ring, he will have to wait patiently for the opportunity to unleash his poison. Patience may be a virtue, but Jones' is beginning to wear.

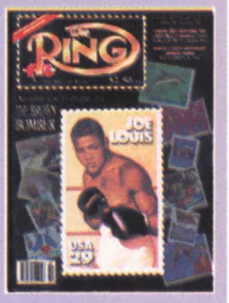
"It's frustrating because I want a title," he said. "But I really don't set my hopes high. I feel like I've been a victim of bad luck. For me to set my heart on Rabanales, I'd be counting my chickens before they hatch. It will surprise me if I get it and it won't surprise me if I don't."

It will surprise even more people if he gets it and doesn't win it.

***

ADDENDUM: Jones finally got his title shot in October '93 against Julio, winning the WBA belt with a 12-round unanimous decision. But he didn't hold it long. In April '94, Jones was stopped by John Michael Johnson in the 11th round. Poison bounced back with a major upset win over then-unbeaten Marco Antonio Barrera in November '96 and repeated the feat via decision in a rematch, but back-to-back kayo losses against Kennedy McKinney and Erik Morales soon followed, and Jones was essentially done as a serious contender in his late-20s. Poison last fought in '02, dropping a 10-round decision to journeyman Ivan Alvarez, which dropped the Brooklynite's career record to 50-6 (28). ■

THE RING, May 1962



***The Cover*:** Joe Louis was a great many things to a great number of people, and the United States finally commemorated one of the legends of sports by making Louis the first boxer to ever appear on a postage stamp. THE RING acknowledged the enormous contributions Louis made to the U.S. during his career and stay in the Army.

***Back Atop The Hill*:** By scoring a unanimous decision over Frank Tate to claim the vacant WBA light heavyweight title, Virgil Hill showed the doubters that his setback against Thomas Hearns was not the end of him. "I want to take that win and stuff it right back up those asses who said I was finished after my loss to Tommy," Hill said.

***What If ...* :** THE RING looked back at crucial moments in recent major fights, and asked if a few seconds could have changed boxing history. For example, what would have happened if Buster Douglas hadn't gotten up from the eighth-round knockdown he suffered against Mike Tyson? THE RING speculated that Tyson's historical standing would have been vastly altered.

***Zulueta Cuts In*:** 1950s Cuban lightweight Orlando Zulueta didn't pack an especially heavy punch, but when Zulueta hit an opponent, he had an uncanny ability to open up cuts. THE RING took a look back at the man who once cut up an opponent so badly in the first round that the referee checked to see if the Cuban had razors hidden in his gloves.

***Fighter Of The Month*:** Nigel Benn earned the honors by taking a trip to Italy and dethroning WBC super middleweight titlist Mauro Galvano. Benn won the belt by via fourth-round stoppage, with the end coming on cuts with Benn way ahead on the scorecards.

THE FIGHT DOCTOR

KNOWING WHEN TO STOP A FIGHT

By Margaret Goodman, MD

It might surprise you to learn that a ring doctor's consideration of whether to recommend that a fight be stopped should start before the contest even begins.

On any given day, one fighter can beat another. However, no fighter comes without a history. Perhaps he is turning pro after a short amateur career, or he may be a once-successful boxer who is losing his legs. Just as a surgeon would never operate on a patient without knowing the patient's medical history, the ring physician must be acquainted with the fighter's record, opponents, when and where they fought, and medical suspensions.

The weigh-in enables me to see the fighter up close and personal. I can assess his speech pattern, gait, and response to questions. Furthermore, I can establish contact and assess the cornermen.

It is to the fighter's benefit to speak with the doctor at the weigh-in, and make him aware of any recent health issues or prior injuries. The better the doctor knows the fighter professionally, the more comfortable he will be in allowing the fight to continue should the same medical problem arise (such as a cut reopening).

To me, boxing is very much a team sport. The team is made up of the referees, inspectors, ring doctors, and cornermen. We are each there for a similar purpose: to allow the fight to proceed to its natural conclusion under fair and safe circumstances.

The inspectors are commission-appointed, trained individuals who are alongside the fighter from the time he arrives until he leaves the venue. Inspectors are the eyes and ears of the doctors, referees, and commissioners. Between rounds they mount the ring apron to ensure that only legal substances are used. Through careful observation, the inspector can give me a heads-up as to when a corner might be thinking their fighter has had enough or advise me of a boxer's complaint that would otherwise go unnoticed.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Observing how a fighter reacts to his trainer's between-rounds instruction call tell the doctor a lot

At the arena before the show starts, I meet with the referees to discuss how a fighter has looked at the weigh-in and in his last few bouts. We review how various situations should be handled if they arise during the contest. Top-notch referee Joe Cortez always mentally prepares himself for different scenarios.

"In the case of Juan Manuel Marquez and Manny Pacquiao, after seeing the fighters in the dressing room I knew anything could go down," said Cortez. "The three knockdown rule was not in effect and I had two well-conditioned and well-skilled boxers."

During a fight, the doctor should be heard little and seen

even less. In Nevada, the referee is considered the sole arbiter. In other words, everything must go through him and he is the only one who can halt a bout. Several states allow the doctor *or* the referee to stop the fight. In truth, this is merely a small difference in approach. Either method is acceptable, as long as there is communication.

Nevada referees always listen to the advice of our ring physicians, but the refs are closest to the action, and we believe having one person in charge eliminates confusion. There are also times when the referee requests the doctor to examine a fighter. If the doctor checks a cut between rounds, he should then step away and privately advise the referee of the fighter's condition. In this way, both officials are on the same page as to whether or not there is an impending problem.

I believe it is wrong for the referee or doctor to tell the corner and fighter, "I am only giving you one more round" or discuss the injury in the corner other than to offer reassurance. Too much discussion by ring officials during a fight can alter the boxer or trainer's fight plan. This is not our role.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Ref Cortez allowed Marquez to continue after three first-round knockdowns because he was still clear-eyed and fresh

There is nothing more perplexing for the ring physician than when a fighter doesn't answer a question or stares at you as if you are from outer space. Furthermore, cornermen who prevent the doctor from examining a cut or start an argument are taking precious time away from attending to their boxer. They are also increasing the likelihood that a physician will recommend a stoppage because he cannot make an accurate ringside assessment. Conversely, the doctor needs to let the corner work and instruct their fighter.

Using a penlight, I look to see how the fighter's pupils react. It also enables me to grab his focus for a split second. If the pupils are poorly reactive (don't constrict rapidly when exposed to the light) or are of unequal size, this could indicate a serious brain injury.

Lengthy questions are confusing to all and don't tell the doctor what he needs to know. As a neurologist, I can tell much more by listening to the fighter-trainer interaction. Is the boxer speaking clearly? Is he following commands such as "open your mouth," "drink some water," "turn your head," and "spit out some water"? Following these simple requests tells me as much, if not more, than questions such as, "What round is it?" In truth, things are happening so fast, I, too, may not always know what round it is!

I always have an idea as to what I am looking for when checking the boxer, as the last thing I want to do is take too long. A fight is meant to be three-minute rounds with one-minute rest between rounds. An indecisive or overly aggressive doctor can end up either, 1) altering the outcome of a fight by extending the timeout, which almost always benefits one fighter over another, or 2) looking at a cut too long and to an extent *treating* the injury, which will also alter the outcome. Besides, a doctor doesn't usually have to spend too much time in a corner to know what's going on. A quick evaluation of the fighter in the one-minute break or just observing while sitting ringside can determine confusion, slowed responses, and loss of balance.

When examining a cut, my decision is predominantly based on how the fighter and cutman are handling it and/or whether or not they can control the bleeding. Other injuries such as nasal fractures, jaw fractures, hand fractures, and knee and shoulder injuries do not require a stoppage as long as the fighter can still fully protect himself at all times.

At a fight, the doctor's best friend is the referee, and vice versa. Unless there is a devastating blow or a series of strong punches, few fights are stopped on the basis of one round. Stoppages typically result from an accumulation of punishment or progression of a cut over a couple of rounds.

Each case is different, and when Cortez is thinking about stopping a fight he considers several factors.

"When I look at a fighter taking punishment, frequently fatigue is already setting in," said Cortez. "Perhaps he is cut and bleeding. I can confer with the doctor between rounds. Now if he goes down, and is clearly outclassed, I cannot let the fight continue.

"This is a contrast to the three knockdowns taken by Marquez. In that case, you had an extremely skilled boxer, fresh, going down three times in the first round with no fatigue, and clear eyes every time he got up."

Perhaps the most important thing a ring official should do is observe the flow of a fight. The two competitors dictate the outcome, but it is up to the referee and ring doctor to accurately interpret that flow with fairness and safety as the goals. Our role is as much to allow a fight to continue to its natural conclusion as it is to stop it. ■

Dr. Goodman will be happy to answer questions about the medical aspects of boxing in future columns. Please send inquiries to: The Fight Doctor, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

TARVER-JONES REACTION

We now realize that Roy Jones does not have his heart in the game and that he can't take a good punch on the chin. Congratulations to "The Magic Man" for delivering the kryptonite.

MANNY PEREZ
Brooklyn, NY

Congrats to Antonio Tarver for his stunning knockout of Roy Jones. I never saw Jones as being the legend he was made out to be. To me, Jones was a light heavyweight version of Naseem Hamed, a very awkward and powerful fighter who had a knack for landing the big bombs and ending fights. And we all know what happened to Hamed when he fought Marco Antonio Barrera. Now, after the rap videos and all the other hype, Jones makes excuses such as not being able to get up for the Tarver rematch. This goes against everything he said leading up to the bout. Jones now joins the other sore loser Julio Cesar Chavez, who just can't bring himself to say what we all know—that he got beat.

JOEY INTRAVIA
Bethpage, NY

Antonio Tarver is now the light heavyweight champion of the world; nobody can take that away what he has accomplished. But the fact of the matter is Roy Jones is still the best light heavyweight in the world. Was Leon Spinks really better that Muhammed Ali? Was Buster Douglas really better than Mike Tyson. Was Oliver McCall or Hasim Rahman really better that Lennox Lewis?

I was, however, really disappointed when Jones said that he really wasn't motivated enough to take a third fight with Tarver. What more does he need? Tarver knocked him out in less than two rounds. If that isn't enough motivation, I don't know what is. I'd hate to think I respected somebody who runs from a knockout.

ANTHONY CUESTAS
Blacksabb19@yahoo.com

I hope Roy Jones rests, regroups, and meets Antonio Tarver in a rubber match—this time at heavyweight. Judging by his drawn, gaunt face, Jones appeared to have had problems making weight again. And if this is true, it can affect not only his stamina and energy and strength, but also his ability to take and recuperate from a punch. Tarver will always pose a problem for Jones with his height, reach, and style, but as long as Jones works the body and stays outside, it's a very winnable fight for him at heavyweight.

SCOTT MIERZWIAK
Toledo, OH

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Roy Jones' shocking knockout at the hands of Antonio Tarver generated considerable mail. Some readers, such as Manny Perez, were overjoyed by "The Magic Man's" success. Others, such as Scott Mierzwiak, hope Jones can beat Tarver in a rubber match.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/COURTESY OF TOP RANK

Undefeated junior welterweight Miguel Cotto has impressed a lot of people, including reader Paul M. Sotack, who believes the Puerto Rican sensation is ready for the best in both the 140- and 147-pound divisions.

EQUAL JUSTICE

Roy Jones' first blemish came when he was disqualified for hitting Montell Griffin while he was down. Manny Pacquiao could easily have suffered the same fate when he hit Juan Manuel Marquez after the third knockdown in round one.

RUBEN SALAZAR
Elk Hart, TX

WE WANT OUR *FNF*

I couldn't agree more with the way reader Samuel Robinson feels about the situation at ESPN and the future of *Friday Night Fights* ("ESPN Blues," Summer 2004). This is a network that will televise dog shows, spelling bees, and a number of other events that sports fans have absolutely no interest in. I refuse to believe that they can't make things work for boxing fans. *Friday Night Fights* is a program for the real boxing fans, and I would hate to see it go. We've already suffered a big enough blow losing Max Kellerman. I urge boxing fans everywhere to let ESPN know they are making a mistake.

TRAVIS ALLRED
Salt Lake City, UT

COTTO KUDOS

Miguel Cotto is going to be one of the greatest fighters of all-time. He's a thinking fighter who has patience, great defense, and a killer left hook. Bring on Floyd Mayweather, Kostya Tszyu, and Cory Spinks!

PAUL M. SOTACK
Buffalo, NY

TAINTED REVENGE

I'm responding to a letter from Patrick Tree that appeared in the July 2004 issue ("Lewis' Legacy"). I disagree with his statement about Lennox Lewis beating every opponent he faced. Oliver McCall knocked out Lewis, but when they had their rematch, Lennox was fighting a sick man who had no business being in the ring. McCall's medical problems beat him, not Lewis.

JIM WATT
Los Angeles, CA

MARQUEZ IN THE MIX

Paul Salgado's article about Erik Morales in the July 2004 issue ("Three Division Titlist Erik Morales: At 130, He Can't Afford To Be Overconfident") was very good. The only thing that bothered me was that the article never mentioned Juan Manuel Marquez. Diego Corrales, Joel Casamayor, Manny Pacquiao, and Acelino Freitas were all mentioned as possible opponents for Morales. There's no doubt that these are among the best in the world, but how can you not include Marquez in the mix? In my opinion, Marquez has not gotten the recognition he deserves.

JOSE VARGAS
McAllen, TX

WHY WAS MANNY MISSING?

I'm writing about what appears to me to be an oversight concerning the cover of THE RING EXTRA's "State Of The Game" issue (July 2004). In the piece itself, Eric Raskin wrote that had it not been for James Toney, Pacquiao probably would have been the 2003 Fighter of the Year. But Pacquiao wasn't featured on the cover. He was also the only fighter in your pound-for-pound list not to appear on the cover, which depicted 16 fighters. If you can picture Fernando Vargas and Chris Byrd, I don't see how you can exclude Pacquiao.

It might seem to you that as a Filipino-American, I'm complaining about an issue of popularity, but if you turn the cover into a popularity contest instead of giving us a cover that truly shows something about the state of the game, then it seems to me I have a right to complain.

ERWIN PONCE
Elk Grove Village, IL

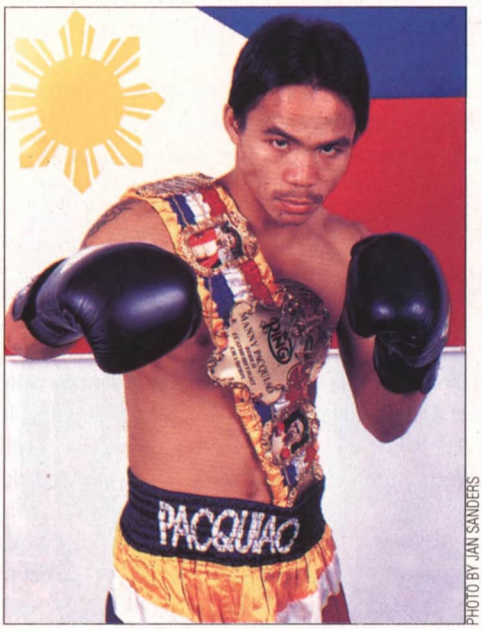


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Despite being featherweight champion, Manny Pacquiao wasn't among the 16 fighters featured on the cover of THE RING's "State Of The Game" issue, which upset Filipino-American reader Erwin Ponce. Hopefully, Mr. Ponce will feel better after seeing this photo.

FIGHTER, WRITER, OR BOTH?

Judging by the few things he's written for THE RING, I think former WBC bantamweight titleholder Wayne McCullough might have a pretty decent second career as a journalist. Has Wayne hung up his gloves for good in favor of punching a keyboard?

GORDON WARRINGTON
Pompano Beach, FL

[Editor's note: As we went to press, McCullough was scheduled to fight in Belfast, Northern Ireland, on June 17.] ■

LOOKING AHEAD

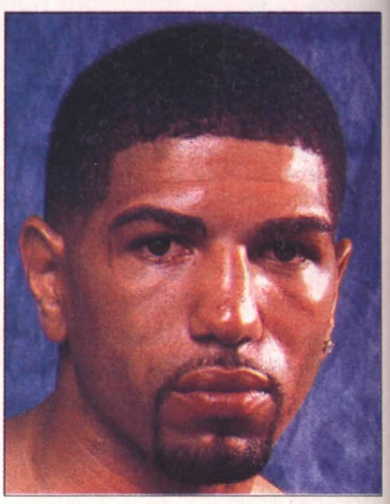
By Eric Raskin

BAD NEWS FOR MOSLEY: WINKY'S STILL HUNGRY

One of two things has to happen for **Shane Mosley** to have a chance at reversing his loss to **Winky Wright** when they meet in November in a junior middleweight championship rematch: Either Sugar Shane, under new trainer **Joe Goossen**, needs to improve dramatically and fight an altogether different fight, or Wright needs to lose the focus and hunger that made him so dominant on March 13 and turn in a far inferior performance.

According to Wright, there's no way either is going to happen.

"I don't think there's anything Shane can do to be better," world champion Wright said in late-May, while the final details for the rematch were being sewn up. "No matter what Joe Goossen tells him, no matter what he practices in training camp, once we get in there and I start hitting him and frustrating him, he'll revert right back to what he did in the first fight. No disrespect to Joe Goossen, but I don't care who Shane has in the corner, you can't undo the style and instincts he's had for the last 12 years as a pro. The only thing I can see him doing differently is coming out and trying to bomb, but he can't hurt me. He doesn't hit as hard as he thinks he does.



Wright: Confident entering rematch

"As for me, I'm still as hungry as ever. Even though I'm finally getting respect from people in boxing as the champ, I still feel I'm not there yet. There's still a few fighters I want to get at before I'm there, guys like **Felix Trinidad** and **Oscar De La Hoya**. I'm still hungry, I still ain't made the big money. I'm getting there, but I'm not there yet."

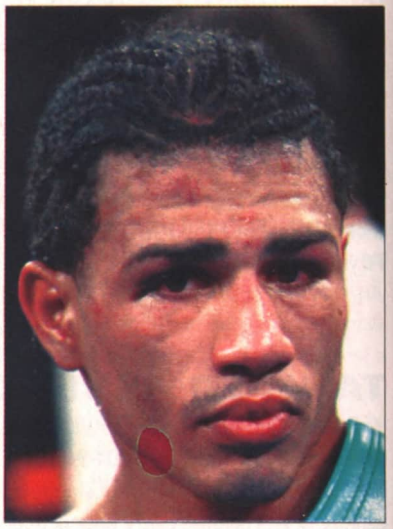
If it were completely up to Wright, this rematch wouldn't even be happening, and he'd be trying for a fight with Trinidad instead. But there was a clause in the contract that allowed Mosley the immediate return with Wright if he wanted it, and Sugar Shane exercised it. And even if there wasn't a contractual obligation, Wright would still have granted Mosley the rematch because he feels he owes it to Mosley, who gave Wright a title shot when he didn't have to. That said, Wright is surprised Mosley exercised the option.

"I dominated him. I would've thought he'd want to come back in an easier fight first," Wright said. "But Shane is a warrior, and he apparently wants to come right back and prove he can beat me."

He wanted to do the same thing when he took an immediate rematch with **Vernon Forrest** two years ago, and we all know how that turned out. Mosley had better know something we don't if he doesn't want history to repeat itself—again.

LISTEN UP

November's shaping up to be a big month for world title rematches. Showtime is holding November 6 for **Kostya Tszyu-Sharmba Mitchell** II, with Australia and Atlantic City the leading candidates to host the 140-pound championship fight ... Two junior lightweight belts will be unified on July 31, when **Erik Morales** and **Carlos Hernandez** meet in a pay-per-view clash from the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. On the undercard, a couple of strawweight belts will be unified as well when fast-rising 2000 Puerto Rican Olympian **Ivan "Iron Boy" Calderon** faces his toughest test yet in streaking **Daniel Reyes** ... Speaking of young Puerto Rican fighters, **Miguel Cotto** will be headlining a show in his homeland on September 11, possibly against unbeaten Brazilian prospect **Kelson Pinto**. A rematch between **Daniel Santos** and **Antonio Margarito** (you may recall they fought to a one-round no-contest in July '01) is being considered for the co-feature. ■



Cotto: Homeward bound

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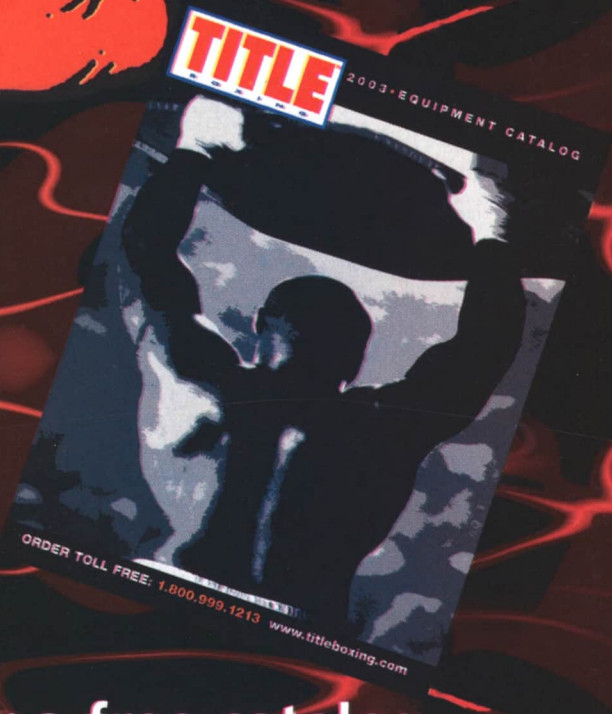

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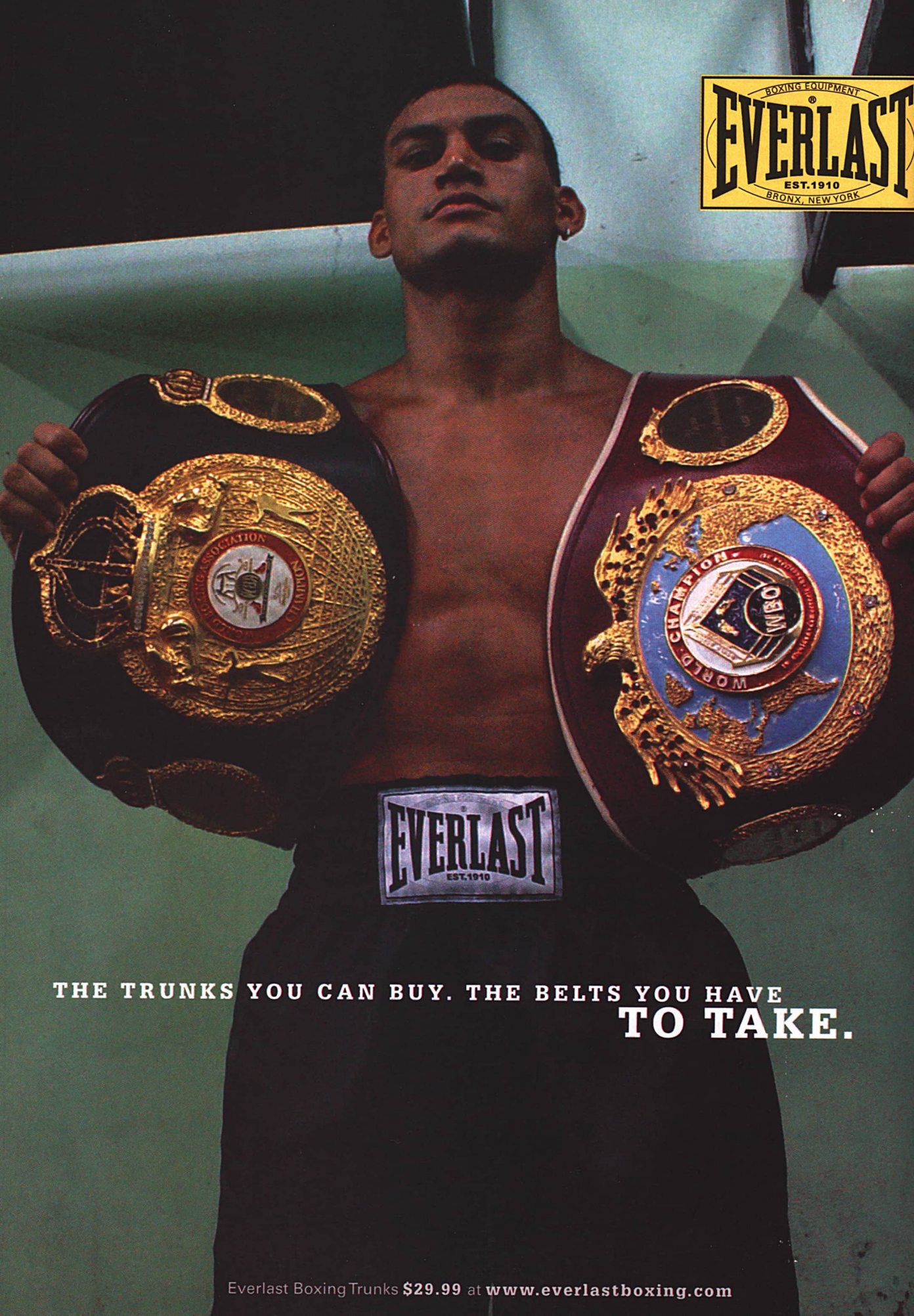
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